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Art/Thomas B. Hess

PRIVATE FACES IN PUBLIC PLACES

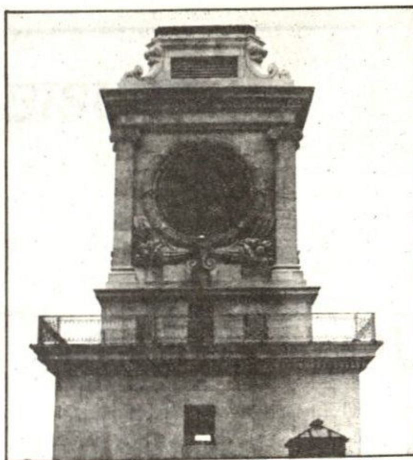
"...My vote for the most perfect show of the season is in an old clock-tower, like a Roman villa, perched on a 13-story building . . ."

Painting and sculpture always have been part of everyday life in Europe; public art is something kids play ball next to; it's what you see on your way to work. In America, on the other hand, public art usually is confined to formal, grandiose contexts and turned into symbols of political and economic power. It celebrates the triumphs of the Grand Army of the Republic or Robert Moses and is sited to dominate, to overpower. It's no wonder that most Americans think art is a hoax—they can tell that what they see from the corners of their eyes is part and parcel of a big sell.

This is one of the reasons why the new project of the Institute for Art & Urban Resources is exemplary—an exhibition space in **The Clocktower** of the old N.Y. Life Insurance Building, now a municipal beehive, at 108 Leonard Street. It is a public space that for once is intimate, calm, suitable for "concentrating attention when looking at art," in the words of the Institute's executive director, Alanna Heiss.

The tower itself is a stately pleasure cube decreed from McKim, Mead & White around 1912 by the directors of N.Y. Life. Above the thirteenth story, it affords two levels of walls with high ceilings—white-washed, luminous spaces that brim with trembling, saline, New York Harbor light. The masonry is as heavy as an Imperial Roman villa's, and a sense of entering a classic past persists on terraces and balconies that open off the tower to panoramas of city domes, volutes, pergolas, entablatures, cupolas—downtown architecture above 150 feet is a crazy Vitruvian fantasy.

On May 31, The Clocktower opens its third exhibition—of paintings by **James Bishop** (through 6/23), and I can think of no better choice for this lovely space than Bishop's lucid, quiet, ardent images, which look simple, but which repay "concentrated attention" with an expression as intense as it is difficult to verbalize. Stemming directly from sources in the purist sector of Abstract-Expressionism (Newman, Rothko), Bishop divides his time between New York and Paris, and while his art is distinctly American in accent, its grammar parses into binary oppositions strongly reminiscent of the Parisian Structuralists' dialectic.



New York's new art center, The Clocktower

The paintings are square; a bit over life size (6½ feet). Half of each square is vertically divided into other rectangles which nest in the canvas either on top (like windows or cupboard doors) or at the bottom (like an architectural landscape). This balanced, rational system of directly related small and larger parts is unified and divided—it is a lock in which all the tumblers are exposed. The divisions run along major axes (halves, quarters, etc.), marked by bands of a fixed width (four inches), but all measurements are approximate, hand-made by eye; the tolerances are of a carpenter's rather than a machinist's bench. The appearance of facture—testimony of a moving hand—is plain on the surfaces; the paint seems brushed and delicately manipulated. Close examination, however, reveals that there are no brushmarks; colors have been poured and wiped into position, settling about where the artist wanted them through a more "natural" process than strokes—like sand settles along the margins of a country road. The colors, at first, look planned and forced; color is the primary effect in Bishop, and his strong hues within wholistic compositions suggest an all-out 1960s impact. The 1960s punch, however, is never delivered. Upon study, Bishop's colors become increasingly elusive. At The Clocktower, yellows predominate, but in nameless hues, more like blooms than chemicals—the skin of an untouched apricot or plum. He achieves this by coating opaque yellows over darker hues (e.g., red-brown) or lighter ones (e.g., off-white), in a radical dislocation of the old masters' glazing procedures. At the edges they slide almost imperceptibly into drawing with light-on-dark or dark-on-light.

For a Structuralist analysis, Bishop's binaries could include: dark/light color; activated/smooth surface; exact/approximate division; painted/drawn line; flat/overlapping planes; attitudes that are intellectual/sensual; radical/traditional; American/European. But such an examination—however deeply it leads the spectator into the work, and however much light it throws on its nuances—ends by twisting back to the work itself, to its own precarious syntheses and interlocking actions.

The independent nature of Bishop's paintings, their contemplative, sophisticated quality, nicely fits The Clocktower's tough masonry and elegant proportions. I would vote this the most perfect show of the season.

(108 Leonard Street, between Broadway and Lafayette, is equidistant from the City Hall and Lafayette subway stops. Hours: Thur-Sun, 1:00-6:00.)

NEW YORK MAGAZINE
article on The
CLOCKTOWER, the
exhibition/performance
center of the Institute
for Art and Urban
Resources.

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The New York Times

ARTS AND LEISURE

Section 2

Sunday, May 4, 1975

Art Notes: The 'In' Couple

By GRACE GLUECK

"A large contingent from Uptown sallied Downtown recently for one of the season's chicest openings — a bash at the Clocktower on Leonard Street for a show of works from the collection of Dorothy and Herbert Vogel. Dorothy and Herbert *who?* Well, not exactly plugged into the Scull-Heller circuit, the Vogels (Herbert works for the postoffice, Dorothy's a librarian) have only recently surfaced, though they've been demon collectors since their marriage in 1962. They share a one-bedroom apartment in the East Eighties with six pedigreed cats, 12 exotic turtles and about 500 works of very contemporary art—wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling, here, there and everywhere.

"We do without other things," says Dorothy, a small woman who looks as fragile as a Richard Tuttle drawing (of which the Vogels have no less than 70 stashed under the bed). We don't go to the movies, Europe, eat out much or have a car. We go to the galleries every chance we get."

The Vogel's bent is for Minimal, Conceptual and process art—including paintings, drawings and sculpture. And it might be said that they collect in depth. Besides the Tuttles there are, for example, 45 drawings and sculptures by Sol LeWitt, 16 drawings and paintings by Robert Mangold and 21 works of sculpture by Richard Nonas, a young discovery whom other advanced collectors are just beginning to pick up on. And there are dozens of other "names": a Robert Loeb floorpiece occupies the center of the living room; next to it lies a Bill Bollinger "multiple" of pipes. In their bedroom is a wrap-up by Christo; on the bed a painted canvas-and-wood sculpture by Alan Shields; *under* the bed a latex floorpiece by Lynda Benglis. Some of their objects the Vogels keep covered up so the cats can't get at them—as, for example, two Sol LeWitt cubes that are wrapped in plastic.

"A lot of our things are tough, not sensual," says Herbert, who for his diminutive size and discursiveness is sometimes known as the poor man's Joe Hirshhorn. "It's really a collection for artists, not the public." The Vogels have a close association with their artists, many of whom showed up for the Clocktower opening. "They know we don't have a lot of money," says Dorothy, who keeps meticulous files and documents on the artists. "This collection was built on their generosity."

Why do the Vogels collect? Certainly not for status or investment purposes (unlike certain more publicized acquisitors, they never sell). "Because we like to," says Herbert. "It's part of our lives. And actually, what I'd like to do is make a historical statement of our own time, visually. Anything less is insignificant."

The Vogels' art is the first in a series of four offbeat collections to be shown at the Clocktower, 108 Leonard Street (corner of Broadway; open Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 1 to 6 P.M.). A fast word about the Clocktower, the actual, abandoned clocktower of a city building: it's one of a network of culture spaces run by the non-profit Institute for Art and Urban Resources in an attempt to provide a place—on a minimal budget —for vanguard work to be shown and performed.

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A New Art-World Legend: Good-by, Bob & Ethel; Hullo, Dorothy and Herb!

Kit and caboodle: *Amid works of Baer, Benglis, Judd, Poons, Mangold, and Oppenheim, Herb balances a cat called Dynasty and Dorothy*

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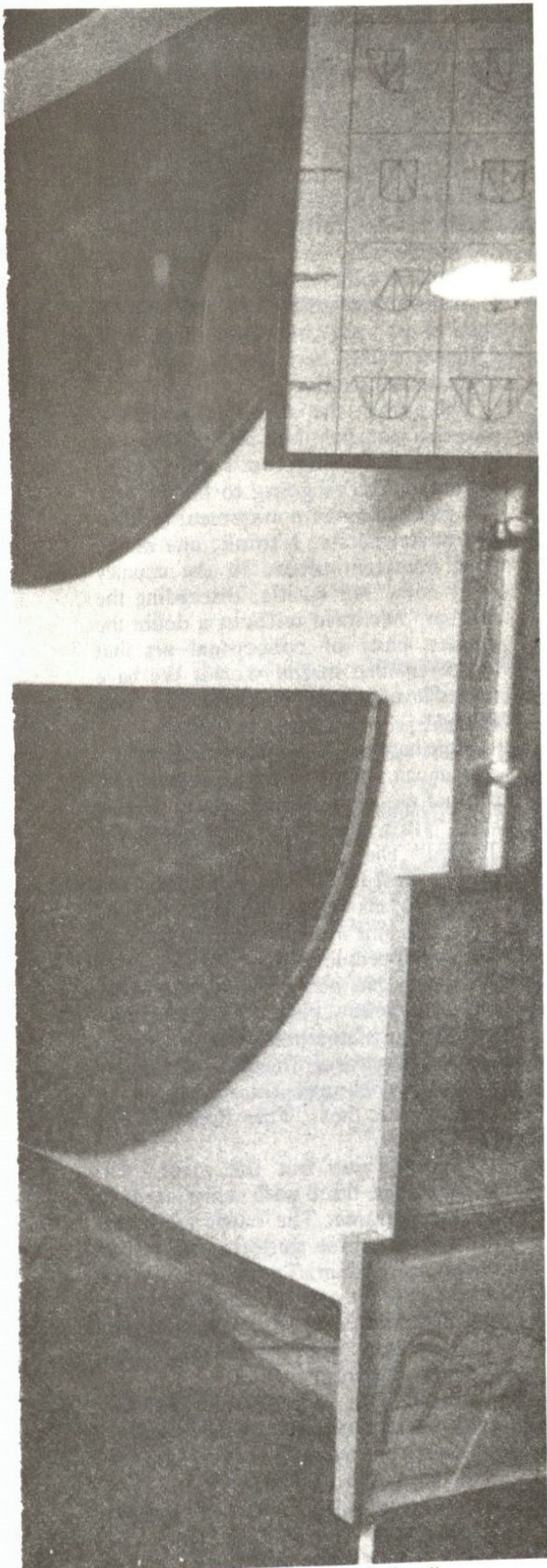
By Anthony Haden-Guest

"...On low municipal salaries, the Vogels have assembled perhaps the finest collection of ultramodern art in New York..."



steadies a Barry called "Closed Gallery."

Photographed by Harry Benson

"Oh, wow!" Herbie Vogel says. "Look at that. A gem! *Wow!*"

Herb and Dorothy Vogel are peering at the artworks. Which is, of course, extraordinary because this is just one more opening, with the usual crowd, two or three arts superstars, a handful of trimly coiffed museum directors, collectors, columnists, camp followers, moving through those lazy, lethal circles, and here is a couple *looking at the art*. She has straight hair, brownish, and the sort of clothes described as "sensible," while he is dumpy, not so much defiantly drab in the intellectual-as-street-fighter manner, as simply nondescript. They look, in fact, as if they had just wandered in off the street.

Except that now circles are forming around *them*. The knives are sheathed, the stars smile down. They are known, an art-world legend: the *Vogels*. The facts of the legend are that Dorothy Vogel is an assistant librarian (specializing in business) in Brooklyn, that Herbie Vogel is an employee of the U.S. Post Office—roles for which, at first glimpse, they might have been singled out by Central Casting—and that they have assembled what is possibly the finest collection of ultramodern art in New York. Just a fraction of the collection—including works by Robert Morris, Larry Poons, Philip Pearlstein, Nam June Paik, and Donald Judd—is now on show at the Clocktower.

The Vogel apartment is, let us say, cluttered. It's a conventional middle-class Manhattan apartment, smallish living room and bedroom, tiny kitchen and bathroom, and the first things you notice cluttering it are the turtles and the cats. Dissimilar turtles clamber splashily through two aquariums, and six cats of disparate breeds skulk in corners or advance for fondling. One, a speckled Abyssinian, launches itself at my shoulder; I step backward a pace, and both Vogels spring forward in alarm. I have almost backed into an artwork.

"I'm afraid you'll have to be a bit careful in here," Herbie says, apologetically. True. Much of the living room floor, for instance, is impenetrably occupied by a jumble of pieces in wood and metal. The two cylinders of green carpeting on wooden pedestals are not, however, artworks, and I am relieved to hear that I am not the first to have made this error. What they are are scratching posts for cats, and cat precautions have likewise demanded that some of the more delicate pieces get wrapped. Even the "package" by Christo, a piece dating from before the artist's Valley Curtain in Colorado, has been trimly repackaged in Saran Wrap.

There are artworks by prestigious names everywhere, on every wall of the living room, and every wall of the bedroom, behind the bed and under the bed. There are artworks in the kitchen, and even the relatively art-free bathroom carries a mural executed in colored pencils by Dorothy, following instructions by Sol Lewitt. Certain earlier acquisitions have been stowed away in the closet, and such is the crowding that a Marcel Duchamp drawing fell from its perch and is currently away for reframing.

The Vogels literally don't know how much they have—"I do the cataloging during my summer vacation," says Dorothy, hands flickering through half a dozen filing cabinets—but it is certainly more than 500 pieces. "And almost every one of them is an example of the artist's best work," Herbie says, his tones not so much triumphant as judicious. The Vogels visit 25 to 30 galleries a week, and the artists visit the Vogels. Museum directors and curators from Europe—hottest market for the newest American art—visit the Vogels to see just what the Vogels are buying now. And all of this remarkable collection has been created on two low-rung municipal salaries.

Herbie Vogel had nurtured his own painterly ambitions since youth. In the late fifties he was in early middle age and, as now, a postal employee, when he began to study painting at NYU. Just when Abstract Expressionism was tapering off into board-room décor, he joined "The Club," the historic organization founded by New York School artists in 1949. "It was a very important meeting place," Herb notes.

In 1962, Herbie married Dorothy. "I knew nothing about art," she says. "I'm a librarian, so I studied English literature," and she explains how under Herbie's influence she had started studying painting, and liked it. "So both of us wanted to become good art-

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"...The Vogels visit 25 galleries a week, and European museum curators visit the Vogels to see what they are buying now..."

ists. And we got a studio where we studied painting very seriously." She gestures. "Everything on these walls was at one time our paintings. But slowly we began to buy a few things. And slowly we started taking down our works, putting other artists' work up."

The stuff that they were getting, though, was the sort that noncollectors collect. You know, things by friends, and modest works (a gouache by Appel, prints by Picasso and Rauschenberg, a duly signed shopping bag by Andy Warhol). The actual Moment of Illumination came about as follows.

"The *key thing* came when we visited Sol Lewitt's exhibition," pronounces Herbie. Lewitt is a pioneer minimalist and the Vogels visited his studio on, uh . . . Dorothy leafs through a decade of diaries and the seminal date is marked as . . . August 11th, 1965.

"We got our first piece directly from Sol," says Herbie. He means "first" in the Collection Proper. "It was the first piece Sol ever sold," adds Dorothy.

The price was, understandably, reasonable, as was that of the next artist to be acquired, Donald Judd. "We began buying more heavily," says Dorothy, "and about that time the rent went higher. So we decided to give up the studio. We came to the conclusion that we were better at collecting than we were at painting."

Where now is the Vogel oeuvre? "My mother-in-law has one . . . my sister-in-law has one," Dorothy says. A light giggle. "My brother lost one in a flood. So that's one less. . . ."

"They're not worth saving," Herbie observes, philosophically.

Dorothy by then was supporting Herbie, the turtles, and the cats, while the entire U.S. Postal Service stipend was going into the collection. Pop Art was, of course, the expensive Wow! at this time, so the Vogels—converts to the cerebral nöosphere of the minimal, conceptual, and earth artists—were able to buy cheaply, early, and with missionary zeal.

The New York artists were intrigued. The Vogel eye became celebrated, the Vogels as petit-bourgeois patrons hardly less so. They *cared*. Also the artists' chronic suspiciousness was lulled by the Vogels' promise Never, Never to Sell. The artists were happy to part with their finest pieces way, way below cost. The actual sums are, as Dorothy puts it, "a very solemn secret," but Christo, for example, accepted a few hundred dollars for a package worth many thousands on the market.

Oddly, the Lewitt which triggered the entire process no longer exists. "Sol came over one night to dinner," says Dorothy, "and he didn't like that piece anymore. So he destroyed it." It was replaced. "He gave us a piece, which was eight feet high. But our ceilings weren't high enough so we couldn't stand it up. And it looked terrible horizontal."

"It's a crime we lost it," Herbie says, "because I loved it. But we don't like to mutilate other people's work."

"We can't show things under the proper lighting," adds Dorothy, "because we don't have the proper lighting. But at least if it's supposed to be vertical, we show it vertical."

Showing is The Thing. Here is the final Lewitt replacement, for instance—"that black piece, which is one of his first modular pieces," cries Herb—and here is the Richard Long. It is a photograph of a field, grass, and daisies. Two swaths have been cut through the daisies, intersecting in the shape of an *X*. "This is his most major piece of the time . . . *Plucked Daisies*. We're very lucky to have it in this country."

"That's an early Mangold," says Dorothy, "and Beuys . . . Beuys . . . Beuys . . . and this is Larry Poons. One of his unusual color drawings."

And then there's the Tuttle hexagon, a white paper shape pasted to the living room wall by Tuttle himself. "Mr. Richard Tuttle!" Herb says, "and there's nobody in the world at this moment that has the number of Tuttles we own! *These* Tuttle drawings were shown at the Fogg."

"The Mark Di Suvero was exhibited at the New York Cultural Center," says Dorothy, indicating, "*and* that Robert Smithson. . . ."

And here is the John Chamberlain—a crushed car piece—that was loaned to the Guggenheim, and the Vito Acconci that was seen at the Whitney. It shows the artist in photoseries, stepping on and off a chair. "It's an important piece," Herbie observes, "because that's when Acconci became a body artist."

Everywhere, highlights. Here, for instance, is the Dieter Rot, a swirl of crumbling browns. "Isn't that a beautiful piece!" demands Herbie. "It's made out of moldering yogurt," Dorothy explains. "Some people say he's better than Beuys," Herbie adds. "We're lucky to have it in this country."

"And just look at this beautiful Motherwell drawing. And this Tuttle." The Tuttle is an oblong of curiously vivid green, hung at a slant. "It's just magic. I was showing somebody around, an expert, I can't tell you her name. And she looked at this and said: 'Herb, I can't go on!' It was the *energy*, you see. I was very moved by that."

"Artists come here and are encouraged to go home and do a lot of work," adds Dorothy.

"Look at these!" says Herbie. "Lucio Pozzi. He's very new. He's one of my predictions. The top one is named after us. *The Vogel Series*. He came over, and said he had been so stimulated. Which was very . . . *interesting*."

"And museum directors come," says Dorothy, "and collectors are encouraged to go back and buy things. One collector walked straight out and went to an artist's studio."

The energy, the stimulation. Herbie pauses a moment, then says, "I want to give you something that's going to be *historical*. You're going to be *the first*. I'm going to make a statement on this! We have what is, I think, one of the most important pieces in the country right now." He swells, discarding the maybes. "We have without a doubt the greatest piece of conceptual art that was ever done in the world. We have the *Closed Gallery* piece by Bob Barry!"

Somehow the European dealers, usually much more sharp vis-a-vis conceptualism, missed this piece, Herbie says. "It's a great piece, but it's tough! Tough!" The way Herbie got it was that he went to Bob Barry's studio and found, to his astonishment, that the piece was still available. Showing how far behind people still were.

Dorothy gets out the documentation: a piece of yellow paper signed by Robert Barry, which states that the Vogels are the owners of the *Closed Gallery* piece. Barry's note concludes, on an austere note, that "This Paper Is Not For Display."

Herbie fetches out the piece itself. It consists of three stiff white cards in an oblong frame. The cards are invitations to the three galleries in, respectively, Amsterdam, Turin, and Los Angeles, where the exhibition, so to speak, traveled. Printed on the invitations are the dates and times of the show, and the following information:

DURING THE EXHIBITION THE GALLERY WILL BE CLOSED (Amsterdam)

FOR THE EXHIBITION THE GALLERY WILL BE CLOSED (Turin)

And, most simply (in Los Angeles), THE GALLERY WILL BE CLOSED.

The Vogels sigh, and glow. ■

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the village VOICE

Copyright © 1975 The Village Voice Inc. VOL. XX No. 18 THE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF NEW YORK MON. MAY 5, 1975

The collectors DOROTHY AND HERBERT VOGEL spend most Saturday afternoons touring the uptown and Soho galleries. They are not the easiest people to spot, since both are physically on the diminutive side. But there is nothing diminutive about their zeal for up-to-the-minute art. As they make their way through the galleries, lavishing praise on favored artists, effusively greeting old friends, the Vogels leave behind them a trail of bonhomie.

Herb (he doesn't like to be called Mr. Vogel) is a postal employee, though he speaks his mind freely and displays the disheveled sort of swagger that would seem to qualify him as the archetypal cabdriver. His wife, Dorothy, is a sharp-eyed librarian, who tends to watch the proceedings quietly from behind owlish spectacles. Together, they accumulate minimal and conceptual art, and the documentary ephemera produced by "process" and "earth" artists.

Until recently the Vogels had about 500 works squirreled away in their one-bedroom apartment. But now some 40-odd items, or a little less than one-tenth of their collection, may currently be seen at the Clocktower, 108 Leonard Street. (The Clocktower is open Thursdays through Saturdays, 1-6 p.m., until May 17.) Most of the "biggies" are represented (including Andre, Lewitt, Morris, Judd, and Tuttle), though usually by drawings or minor examples. On the whole, there appears to be little in the collection that any museum might clamor for. All the same, it's an impressive gathering. Almost every item seems to be prized not only for itself but also as a souvenir of a meaningful friendship. □

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THE SOHO WEEKLY NEWS Vol. II, 31

Thursday, May 8, 1975 34

"SELECTIONS FROM THE COLLECTION OF DOROTHY AND HERBERT VOGEL" (The Clocktower, 108 Leonard Street; Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 1 to 6 PM): New York Magazine seems to think that Herb and Dorothy Vogel are the collectors of the decade ("A New Art World Legend: Goodby, Bob and Ethel; Hullo, Dorothy and Herb!"). Anthony Haden-Guest's piece was snide, however. Robert Barry's "Closed Gallery" piece, owned by the Vogel's, was ridiculed by implication. I'm not sure that it is the greatest conceptual art work ever done, as the Vogels believe, but it is a serious work. For various exhibitions, he closed galleries, so the work exists in the form now of the announcements and the idea.

The Clocktower is sponsored by the Institute for Art and Urban Resources which attempts to make available for art otherwise unused spaces and this is the first in a series called "Collectors of the Seventies." When I was interviewing them for WBAI, Herb Vogel said that it was a good place to show their collection because they are poor and The Clocktower is poor, too.

On display in the pure white spaces are forty-two pieces from their collection which is now past the five hundred mark. Later this year there will be a larger selection at the I.C.A. in Philadelphia. Here we do get to seem many fine works. There is a stunning LeWitt wall drawing; a fine Tuttle, a fine Andre, and many other works. The selection is weighted towards the minimal and the conceptual, which are Vogel specialties, and the installation is almost blindingly sparse. Saturdays the Vogels themselves are there and this apparently makes the whole thing a bit more homey.

I've known the Vogels for a long time. In the art world, it is hard to escape them, since they go to every art opening and are loyal art aficionados. I was lucky enough to see their collection in their modest apartment a year or two ago and it is true what they say: there's art everywhere. It is unbelievable. And cats and turtles. They really do love the art that they have collected. I myself wish that there had been more of their personal ambiance about the current installation and selection, more of a jam, but I suppose that's what happens when what was private goes public. Sharing, although related to protecting, is different.

The Vogels have managed to collect important art works on a modest income. He works for the post office; she is a librarian. Both once were painters. The moral is that you don't have to be born rich to appreciate and collect art. I suppose they've gotten their share of bargains, but it is their commitment that counts and their pleasure and their concern for artists. They claim they'll never sell most of the work they have. ●

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Newsweek

July 21, 1975

ART

Barn Raising

Gone are the days when young and neglected artists sat cowering in their studios, waiting for a nod from the lush commercial galleries. Boosted by a growing spirit of independence and occasional assistance from public agencies, the "outside" American artist is beginning to establish his own art gallery—most frequently a cooperative, owned in partnership with other artists. He has also taken to exhibiting in his own studio and in new "alternate" exhibition centers like the ramshackle 112 Greene Street in the heart of New York City's SoHo district and the Clocktower, a converted storage space at the top of a tall city-owned building near Wall Street, both of which are managed or advised by artists. "This movement is mostly about artists selecting artists," says Jonathan Price, president of the new national Association of Artist-Run Galleries. "Most of them dislike commercial systems: they are proud to appear in co-ops and public spaces, not ashamed. Everyone's pulling together—like barn raising."

The roots of this pride are esthetic and political. Many of the co-op artists belong to vanguard schools; they regard live performances as works of art and reject the notion that art is a commodity fit for sale. The activist '60s whetted this mood, and many of the co-op leaders, most of whom are now in their 20s and 30s, are explicitly political. Both the SoHo 20 and Artists in Residence (AIR) galleries in New York are exclusively owned by women artists. AIR holds regular conferences to discuss the survival of women in the art market. Artists Space, also in SoHo, hosts a steady round of rousing debates and dialogues between artists, critics and dealers.

Contrast: This remarkable and little-noticed surge could not have come at a better time. Nearly all the commercial galleries exhibiting contemporary art are reeling from the recession and clogged with big names acquired in the halcyon '60s. By contrast, the new co-ops are wide-open and extremely active. The artist-owners of galleries like 55 Mercer in SoHo and the NAME Gallery in Chicago share all management loads—from scheduling and printing announcements to installing and selling.

The new exhibition centers, funded by public as well as private sources, are equally vigorous. The Washington (D.C.) Project for the Arts (WPA), situated in an old opera house in the center of the city and directed by Alice Denney, a well-known collector and patron, is open to dancers and filmmakers as well as painters and sculptors. The nonprofit Institute of Art and Urban Resources in New York has created some valuable new studio-and-exhibition spaces, such as the Clocktower, in eight old buildings scattered throughout the city. "We aren't about fancy buildings," says Alanna Heiss, president of the institute. "We're about the expansion of contemporary art."

The art in these new spaces is as diverse and rambunctious as the institutions themselves. Westbroadway, AIR, SoHo 20 and 55 Mercer are havens for contemporary painting in all its colorful, large-scale variety; 112 Greene has been a nucleus for free-form, process-oriented sculpture and performance (it recently offered a thirteen-day "live-in" by conceptualist Willoughby Sharp). Both the Kitchen and Anthology Film Archives in SoHo have shown the works of video artists, live and on tape. The Washington Project has hosted a spectacular event, "Dance Circus," danced by the artist herself, Mary Anne Liebknecht, and climaxed by the flying of dozens of brightly colored kites.

For all the freewheeling atmosphere, some co-op artists remain reluctant to sell their own work, and three of the busiest co-ops in New York—Westbroadway, Phoenix and Second Story Spring Street Society—employ professional directors to transact business. But Stefan Eins, who runs the hole-in-the-wall store-front gallery 3 Mercer Street, is more typical. Eins offers his tiny space to any artist (including himself) making low-cost art, and he specializes in mediums like wall shelving (as sculpture), snapshot photographs and drawings scraped into the floor. "I want to bring the price of art down," he says, "by selling works for $2.50 or $3. Next fall I will go even further. I will open a flea market for art at which each artist will stand at his own counter."

—DOUGLAS DAVIS with MARY ROURKE in New York

Doug Davis with Mary Rourke in New York

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The New Supercollectors

DOUGLAS DAVIS

Articles on Selected Collectors,
Stanley Marsh: Part II, May/June '75 of
Clocktower Exhibition Series,
"COLLECTORS OF THE SEVENTIES"
Giuseppe Panza di Biumi: Part V, winter/ '76

Newsweek

AUGUST 11'75

Sponsored and Organized by
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Museum Program

No decade in history has challenged the private collector of contemporary art more than the 1970s. The new art is not only more difficult to understand than ever before, it is often so awesome in scale and fixed to a certain environment—drawings dug into the sides of mountains, for example—that it is impossible to take home, even in a moving van. When contemporary art isn't mountain-size, it is aimed at the mind rather than the eye, as in conceptual art, or demands patient viewing as in video art. To collect

Gianfranco Gorgoni

Marsh in Amarillo: 'The bow tie is 14 feet wide'

in the '60s, when money was plentiful and pop art was colorful, demanded little more than a commitment to chic. Now, in the recessionary '70s, it demands a commitment bordering on fanaticism.

Fanatics there are, however, persevering against odds. In particular, there are two widely different collectors—a flamboyant Texan named Stanley Marsh and an austere Italian Count, Giuseppe Panza di Biumo—whose dedication to new art is legendary.

Marsh got started six years ago when he chanced into the Claes Oldenburg exhibition of pop art at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. He was delighted by what he saw at the show—huge hamburgers, towering lipsticks, and most of all Oldenburg's "soft sculpture," which translated hard objects like cars and airplanes into absurd gunny-sack shapes.

"I decided to do some of that for myself," he recalls. As soon as he had finished, Marsh wrote a letter to Oldenburg: "Your show was WONDERFUL! I was totally AWED! I have already done two giant neckties (four-in-hand and bow tie) in bright red oilcloth. The four-in-hand is 40 feet from knot to tip and 8 feet wide, for my mother's chimney. The bow tie, for my grandmother's chimney, is 14 feet wide. Then I decided to do a giant pool table, exactly twenty times scale."

Today Marsh, 37, refers to this piece—this first of many works of earth art to be installed on his 10,000-acre ranch in Amarillo—as "The World's Largest Phantom Soft Pool Table." It is about the size of a football field (color pages) and spreads out across one of Marsh's smaller valleys, nestled in a group of hills. It can only be fully comprehended from afar in the spring, when the Texas grass turns green. From there, the eye sees this amalgam of colored vinyl balls, 3½ feet around, and canvas "cue" 100 feet long, as an outdoor pool table at rest.

Dream: An antiwar activist who made Nixon's enemies list, Marsh is the scion of a wealthy Texas family who manages a vast string of properties and activities from natural gas to cattle to bookstores. But this does not set him apart from other super-rich Texans, or from other art collectors, whom he cordially despises ("Collecting around here is mostly a form of getting money and social climbing," he says). What sets him apart is his ideas. "Art should be two things," he says. "Surprising and hidden. It has to get you out of your mental rut. And it should be far away, so you can't get to see it too easily—like the Mona Lisa or the Taj Mahal. Nothing lives up to expectations. Nothing compares to what people can dream about."

In pursuit of these theories, Marsh began, slowly but determinedly, to create a Hidden Art Ranch in 1969. Roger Dainton arrived to construct a tall, multi-colored work of neon-light art. Robert Smithson showed up to sculpt "Amarillo Ramp," a large semicircular mound in the midst of a lake that alternately rises and dries, losing his life when his plane crashed while he was surveying the site. Ant Farm, a group of vanguard artists and architects, planted ten Cadillacs ("Cadillac Ranch") near a highway that cuts through Marsh's land. Most recently, John Chamberlain—a sculptor of international renown—lived on the ranch for six months, building twelve sculptures out of crushed automobiles gathered from local junkyards.

Innovative: The Chamberlain project is now touring the nation's museums—the closest Marsh has come to cultural respectability. It was first welcomed by the new director of the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, James Harithas, freshly arrived in Texas from the innovative Everson Museum in Syracuse. "He called right up and arranged the show," says Marsh, shaking his head. "That doesn't usually happen around here. The Texas cultural establishment avoids me like the plague."

But Marsh is a pariah not only in Texas. Despite his growing fame, he is misunderstood everywhere, particularly by artists, critics, dealers and museum directors who can't figure out whether he is collector or patron, whether he is seeking profit or glory. Although he receives—and replies to—hundreds of applications by artists to work on his ranch, he selects those with whom he enjoys talking the most. "I like the dialogue as much as or more than the product," he admits. For their work he pays almost nothing save expenses. But after all, as he is quick to point out, most of their efforts can hardly be sold or traded.

The truth is that Stanley Marsh may be the first man in the world to collect the experience of art rather than its material form. It is not the object itself as commodity that he treasures, but the people and the ideas behind it. "If the world were mature, conceptual art would be more valid," he says. "But right now people won't believe an idea like they will a real fact—that's why I hide things around the ranch, to spark the imagination of this generation." That the things are often comic as well as provocative is directly due to Marsh's own personality. He refuses to take anything too seriously, from Nixon to art—which is why his favorite photograph shows him jumping like a vaudeville comedian in front of his own three-lettered sculpture: A-R-T.

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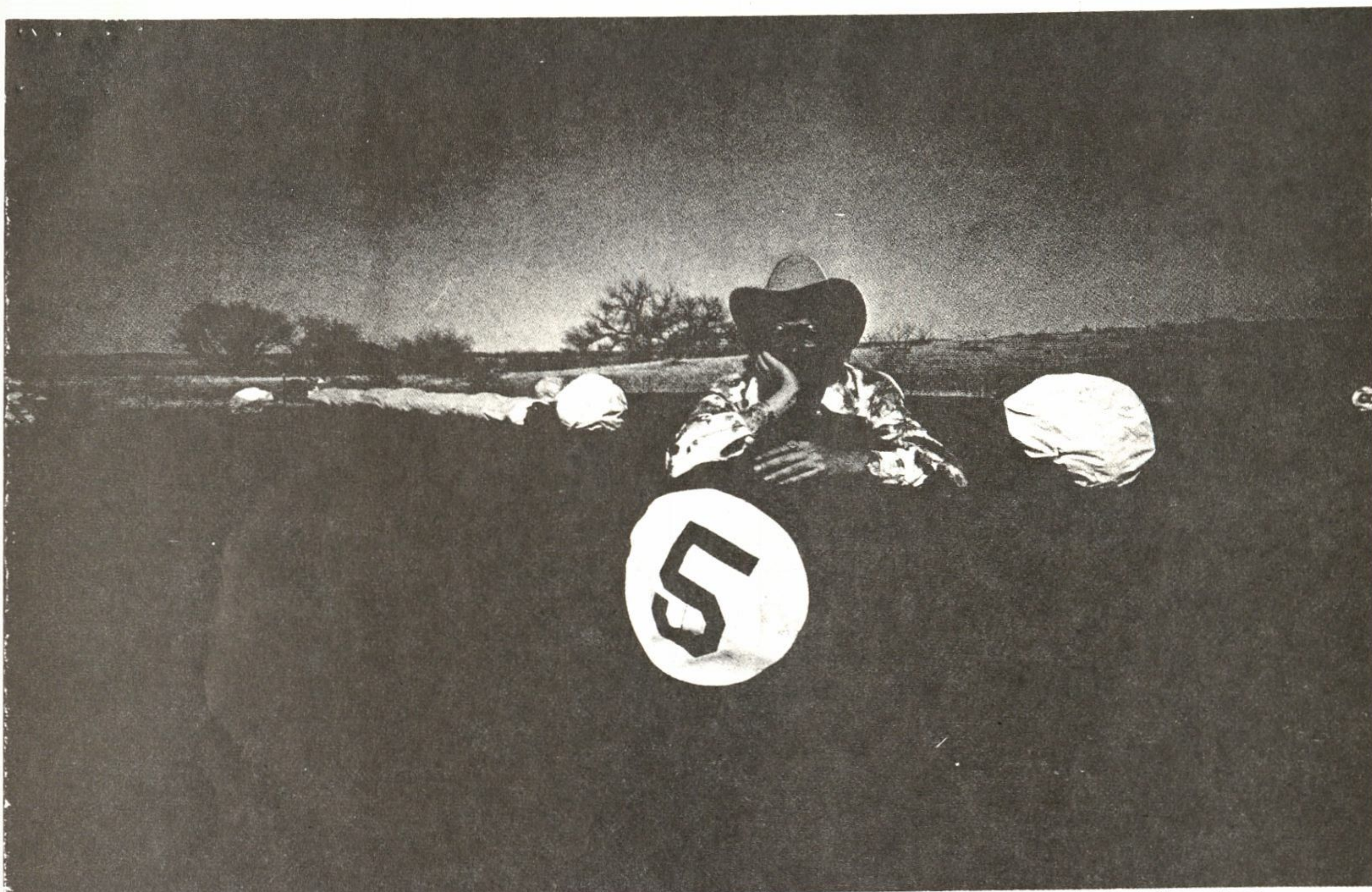
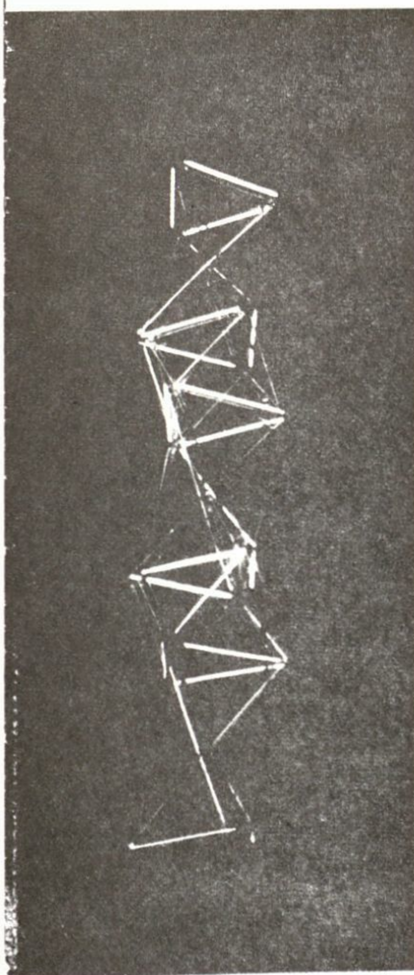
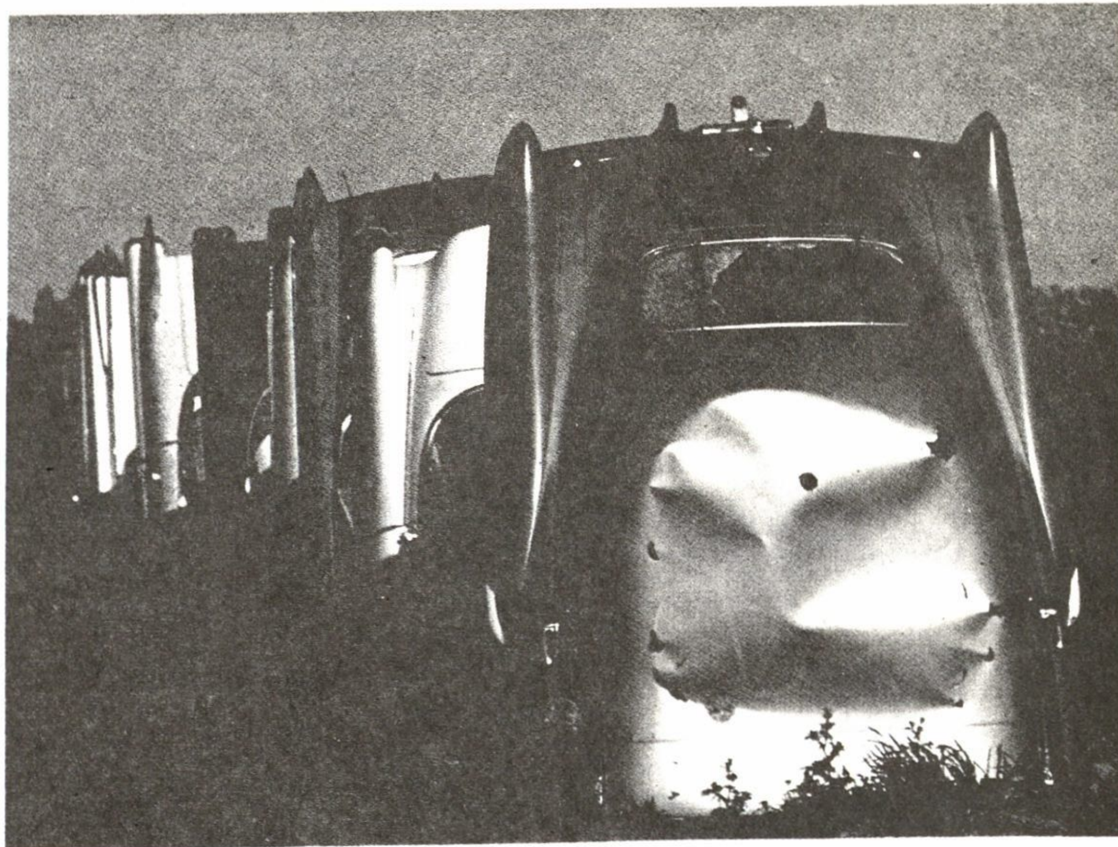


Photos by Gianfranco Gorgoni



Homer Robbins



FIN DE SIECLE: From behind the inflated 5-ball of his own 'Soft Pool Table,' tycoon Stanley Marsh surveys the Texas-size art he grows at his 10,000-acre Amarillo spread, including Roger Dainton's 20-foot neon 'Night Tree' (left) and the ten planted cars of 'Cadillac Ranch'

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The New York Times

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1975

Music: 'In Twelve Parts'

Philip Glass Sums Up Complex Idiom of His Work in Last Section

By JOHN ROCKWELL

When Philip Glass, the composer, first presented his "Music in Twelve Parts" last June at Town Hall, he did it in a six-hour marathon. It was an impressive, even overwhelming event, but by necessity it didn't allow one much opportunity to dwell on the individual parts.

So this month, Mr. Glass has been offering the piece broken down into four parts to a Sunday afternoon, with an intermission after the first two parts in each concert (he is also recording the work). Yesterday afternoon Mr. Glass got around to the last of the four parts—the newest and most complex music in the score. (The series, which is given in a large, newly renovated loft space called the Idea Warehouse, at 22 Reade Street, will end next Sunday at 3 P.M. with a performance of Mr. Glass's earlier "Music with Changing Parts.")

The composer is a leading member of what has been called the hypnotic or trance school of new American music, in that his works have tended to be harmonically static and built up by the linkage of short, repeatable melodic and rhythmic modules.

But anybody who listened to this recent music would be hard put to dismiss it as simplistic. Mr. Glass has summed up his whole idiom in these final four parts, and the result is breath-taking: scurrying, demonic runs in parallel motion in Part 9; developmentally shifting, rhythmically intricate overlappings in Part 10; steady, dreamlike unprepared modulations in Part 11, and counterpointed materials with an extraordinary use of chromaticism in Part 12.

•

Mr. Glass is hardly content to rest on past accomplishments: He is restlessly evolving his style and enriching its content so that Part 12 seems almost more like a beginning than an end.

The ensemble of electric keyboards, winds and female voice consisted of Mr. Glass, Michael Riesman, Richard Landry, Jon Gibson, Richard Peck and Joan La Barbara. They performed superbly, after a little roughness at the start of Part 9. The large crowd stood and cheered at the end.

New York Times article
on Phil Glass performance
at the Idea Warehouse,
22 Reade Street

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New Music

Philip Glass

Joan La Barbara

Philip Glass's music is familiar to most people in the international art world. Unfortunately due to some strange value system, American contemporary artists seem to be appreciated more outside their homeland. Thus Glass and his ensemble perform extensively outside the U.S., doing three to four European tours a year, but make relatively few New York appearances. An organization trying to change this situation a bit and help artists find working spaces and performance areas in the city is the Institute of Art and Urban Resources.

With cooperation from the city administration and partial funding from the New York State Council on the Arts (for the Workspace program) buildings that are either for sale or have been scheduled for demolition, but for which the funds have not yet been voted are made available for limited periods of time to be used as exhibition areas, studios and performance spaces. At present the buildings included in the program are The Clocktower at 108 Leonard St., 10 Bleecker St. and 22 Reade St.

Philip Glass is one of several artists using the workspace area at 22 Reade St., and he and his ensemble (Richard Landry, Jon Gibson and Richard Peck, saxophones and flutes, Joan La Barbara, voice and electric piano, Glass and Michael Riesman, electric organs, Kurt Munkacsi, sound engineer) will inaugurate the Institutes's "Idea Warehouse," an experimental performance space in the same building, with four Sunday afternoon concerts, February 2, 9, 16 and 23 at 3 p.m. A poster for the series has been designed by Brice Marden.

Philip Glass and his ensemble will inaugurate an "Idea Warehouse" with four Sunday afternoon concerts.

For those not acquainted with Glass's work it is music based on small modules of melody (usually 2-5 notes) and the way these modules are expanded, through ornamentation and addition or subtraction of individual notes or whole units, in direct proportion to a fixed cycle, a predetermined number of beats over which the melodies are measured. It also employs an extended or altered time sense, allowing the audience to experience changes in the music at a deceptively slow rate while the modular melodies go through rapid convolutions over a steady eighth-note pulse. The overall effect is extremely powerful yet serene.

Glass's music also works with an interesting acoustical phenomenon. Each room has a favorite pitch, that is, a tone it responds to more acutely than to any other tone. By repeating a chosen group of pitches over a period of time the room acoustics and the played pitches cooperate, producing a long tone which is amplified naturally by the situation and floats through the music. The particular tone generated in this way is not necessarily one which is actually being played by the musicians and may vary from room to room.

On the first three programs of the February series Glass and his ensemble will play "Music in 12 Parts" (which had its first complete performance June 1, 1974 in New York's Town Hall) in preparation for recording. The four-hour work will require six disks (available separately or in a group) with cover layouts designed by Sol LeWitt. It will appear on the Chatham Square label and should be ready for distribution by early May. Plans for the fourth concert now include "Music with Changing Parts" and "Music in 8 Parts," both composed in 1970.

Invitations for the concert series are available at the Clocktower office, 108 Leonard St., 13th floor on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 1 to 6 p.m. prior to the date of each concert. Reservations may be made by calling 233-1096. Some additional invitations will be available at the door, but seating is limited and advance reservations are recommended.

Artists interested in applying to the Workspace program should call Alanna Heiss, executive director, or Linda Blumberg, program director of the Institute of Art and Urban Resources, located in the Clocktower offices mentioned above. Graduate students are requested not to apply, since the program is presently available only to working artists.

Phil Glass

SOHO WEEKLY NEWS review of Philip Glass concert at the Idea Warehouse, 22 Reade Street, a WORKSPACE project.

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Newsweek

March 11, 1974

ART

Country Art and City Art

"Art is going to sleep," cried the arch-dadaist Tristan Tzara in 1918, "for a new world to be born!" Neither end of his prophecy came true, least of all in Manhattan, where more art is hawked in 1974 in more outlets than certain basic commodities, including bread itself—at last rough count: art galleries, 680; retail bakeries, 240. Art dealing, formerly confined to a genteel strolling zone along Madison Avenue, is spreading all over Manhattan; symbolically, the Whitney Museum of American Art has lately opened a branch in the Wall Street area.

The perfect example of this expansion is the Clocktower, a small museum in the esthetic no-man's land of lower Broadway, at the top of a tall building used largely by the municipal bureaucracy, one flight above the last elevator stop. A project of the nonprofit Institute for Art and Urban Resources, the Clocktower is a determined patron of young, vanguard artists. It is currently offering the first public showing of **Alan Saret's** drawings and sculpture in almost three years. Despite his youth (29), Saret is a minor celebrity, having joined the process-conceptual-art outburst of the late '60s. A note now permanently affixed to one of the drawings makes the point neatly: "Alan Saret, I've been hearing rumors of you for three years but having a hard time finding you."

Saret has been alive and well in India all this time, building a house with his own hands and researching the mysticism of the East. He has come back with drawings, ideas and proposals for a new kind of architecture, based in "threadcrafts"—spinning, weaving, knotting and knitting. But it must be said immediately that the "new" Saret cannot yet compete with the "old" one, who is seen in drawings completed before he fled to the East, and in wire-mesh works of soft sculpture. The drawings in particular are a delight: quick, brightly colored semicircles on large expanses of white paper, they display a wit and ease noticeably missing in the later, more labored architectural proposals. They make the climb to the tower worth the effort.

NEWSWEEK review of Alan Saret exhibition at The CLOCKTOWER, the exhibition/performance center of the Institute for Art and Urban Resources.

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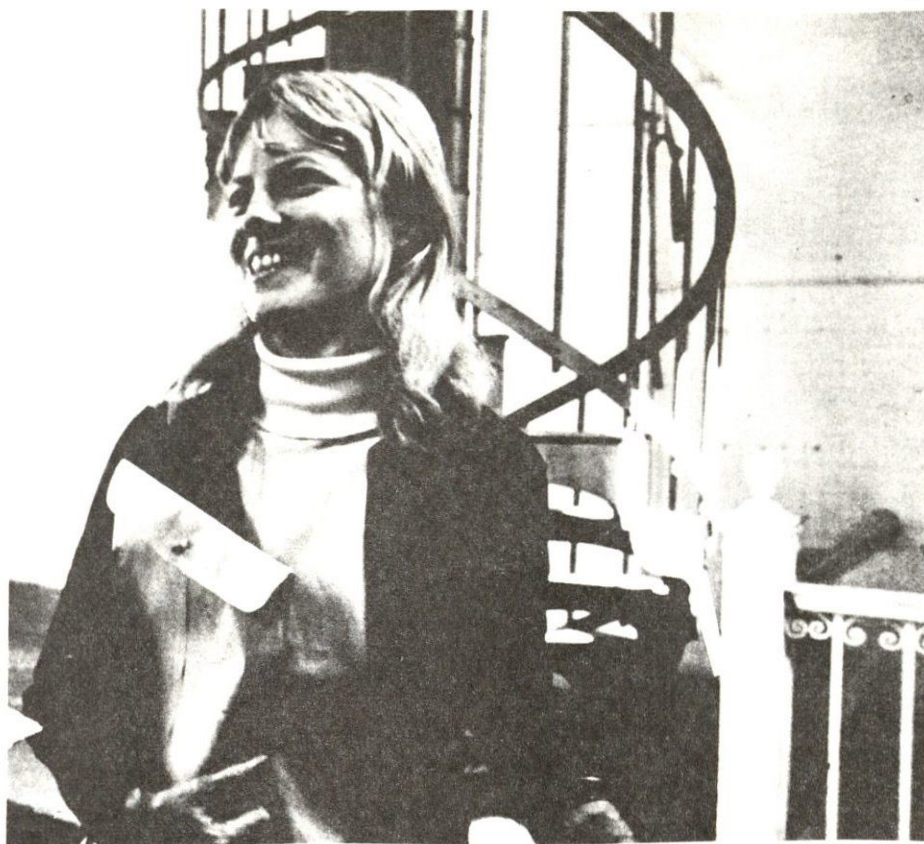
Art in America
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1973

Issues & Commentary



Alternative Spaces—Soho Style

Lew, a pioneer of the free-space concept, has been joined in the past three years by Alanna Heiss, a tiny, stylish bundle of energy who founded the Institute for Art and Urban Resources which runs the Clocktower at 108 Leonard Street. The Institute is a private non-profit organization that relentlessly tracks down space in industrial lofts, warehouses, vacant lots, any place an artist can show his work. Artists are then scheduled into vacant spaces on a short-term basis. Part of Ms. Heiss's inspiration came from the example of "The Space" warehouse run by Bridget Riley and Peter Sedgely on St. Catherine's Dock in London some years ago. The Clocktower space, at the top of a dingy thirteen-story former life insurance building, is exhilarating and versatile—a tranquil white cube frequently drenched in sunlight from high windows. It has provided interesting problems for such artists as Joel Shapiro, Richard Tuttle and James Bishop. The interaction between the artist and an unusual space encourages inventive "solutions" that the commercial gallery space hardly offers. All this is highly appropriate for seventies art, which adapts a casual attitude to the provisional spaces that tend to be its informal arena. In the summer of 1971, for instance, the circular ramps over the Brooklyn Bridge's condemned cobblestone pier provided an extraordinary setting for a mixed bag of occurrences set up by Ms. Heiss: art by Carl Andre and Sol Lewitt; Lee Breuer's Mabou Mines Company; Rudy Burckhardt's films; and a "demolition" banquet of roast pig hosted by the indefatigable Gordon Matta.

The Clocktower, which is planning an unusual group show in the spring with each artist having the space for a few days, has been funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. It also receives donations from several commercial galleries. "They realize the importance of more showing spaces," says Ms. Heiss. "After all," she adds, "the commercial gallery is the real patron of the arts." The Clocktower's board includes Lawrence Alloway, John Hightower, and that artist of legendary generosity, Bob Rauschenberg.

Art In America
article on
The CLOCKTOWER,
exhibition and
performance
center of the
Institute for
Art and Urban
Resources.

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The New York Times

SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 1973

The Diffident Avant-Garde Has an Outpost in the Sky

By PETER SCHJELDAHL

TO see James Bishop's current show of paintings, in a strange new exhibition space called the Clocktower, requires a taste for adventure. First one must travel far downtown to 108 Leonard Street, a grandiose pile built in 1912 for the New York Life Insurance Company and now housing municipal offices. Then it is necessary to take an elevator to the 12th floor, climb some stairs, walk through a couple of dingy corridors and climb some more stairs.

One arrives at last in a white cubular room suffused with sunlight from high, small windows, literally, the inside of a clocktower. (A steel spiral stairway mounts to the machinery of a huge, defunct clock.) On the walls hang six quiet paintings by Bishop, all about six-and-a-half feet square, glowing in color and minimal in design. Between spells of looking at them, one may avail oneself of the view from a heroically balustered and gargoyled balcony outside.

Bishop's is the third show at the Clocktower, the brainchild of a private foundation, the Institute for Art & Urban Resources, and of its executive director, Alanna Heiss. The first two were even less dramatic in appearance, considering their dramatic situation: miniature sculpture by Joel Shapiro and low-visibility paper polygons glued to the wall by Richard Tuttle. This, then, is an outpost in the sky of what might be called the diffident wing of the contemporary avant-garde.

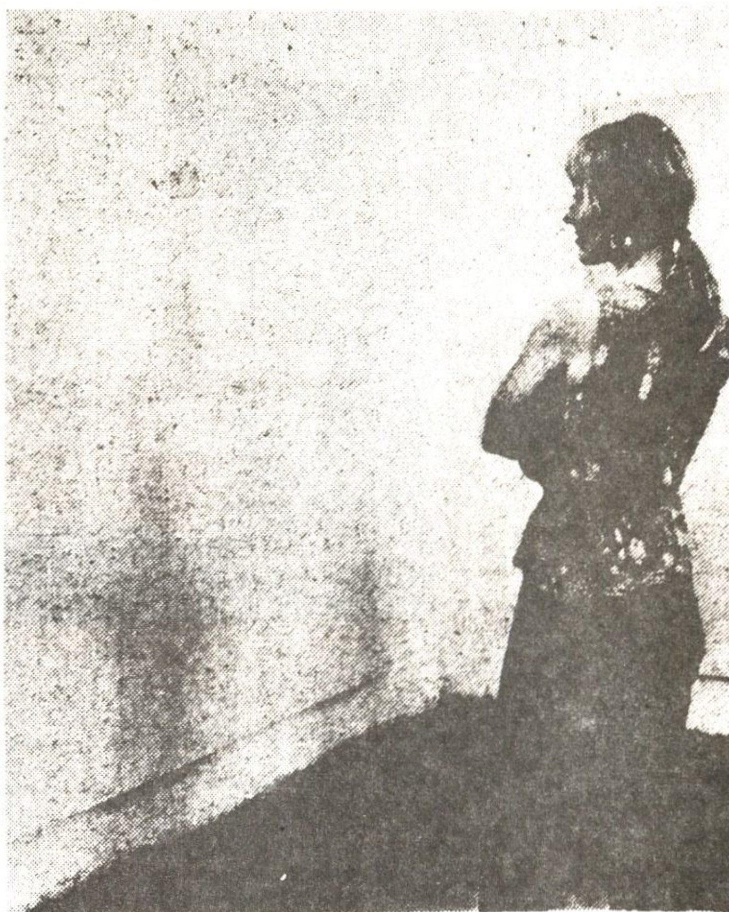
Considered from any angle besides that of viewer convenience, the Clocktower is an inspired project. It is a perfect use of an obscure but lovely "urban resource" and it is a distinct service to the art it shows, an art purposely at odds with the commercial glitter of the conventional gallery space. The Clocktower is a place conducive to attentiveness, even to meditation, far from businesslike galleries and clamorous museums. The experience of visiting it is elevating in more ways than one.

Bishop is perhaps the least well-known of a number of first-rate abstract painters—including Agnes Martin, Brice Marden, Robert Ryman and Robert Mangold — who over the years have fashioned an art of austere brilliance. Oddly and almost eccentrically muted compared to the extravagant Pop, Color Field and geometric painting that dominated the sixties, this art has survived into the seventies as one of the hardiest achievements of the recent American avant-garde. Moreover, it may be an achievement as subversive in its way to usual notions about the avant-garde as it is to common taste.

Painters of this still-nameless variety typically base their careers on the investigation of a very limited range of formal elements blended in a kind of signature motif. The aim is seemingly to avoid every manner of grossness, to refine and sensitize abstraction into an instrument for the subtlest expression of individual sensibility. The result is not the kind of painting that "does something" to the viewer. It is, rather, a kind of painting that challenges the viewer to realize, in his own subjective experience, a mental and even spiritual clarity on a level with its painstaking perfections.

Bishop's new paintings are bisected horizontally. The bottom area is unmarked; the top is divided into two windowlike configurations of nested four-inch swaths. The swaths are not brushed on; the oil paint appears to have been poured, though with great precision. As a result, it is thicker or thinner in some places than in others. This is important because the painting is done with one color over a matte undercoat of another hue. Modulations of color thus indicate how the poured paint settled.

Having tied himself to this single format and the difficult process of creating it as exactly as possible with chancy means, Bishop is left to choose only his colors. At present these run to delicate yellows and browns, forming tints of green where the paint is thin. At one time he made his image of just one color over white, and a blue picture from 1969 is present to represent this earlier stage. A more elaborate recent work is white over crimson over brown: one can count the coats on the unframed sides of the canvas.



Friedman-Abeles

Oil by James Bishop in the exhibition at the Clocktower
"His paintings appeal, via the eye, directly to the mind"

Bishop's paintings are slow to produce their effect, and that effect, once felt, is all but indescribable. It is a little like watching a pale, evanescent sunset through a geometrical grille, except that in this case the sunset and the grille are the same thing. It is precisely his identification of form with color that is the context of Bishop's special magic. The magic itself is the way his paintings appeal, via the eye, directly to the mind, seeming the embodiments of a very high and serene order of mental experience, at once intellectual and "something else."

Bishop's work, like that of Marden and Martin and the rest, is poles apart from the whiz-bang aggressiveness of most of what is regarded as "American-type" abstraction. It make even the tremulous sublimity of Mark Rothko, for instance, seem rhetorical by comparison. It is not easy to open one's sensibilities enough to receive a whiff of this art's peculiar, secret power. It cannot be more possible to do so anywhere, however, than it is in the Clocktower, a setting to match the uniqueness of the art it contains.

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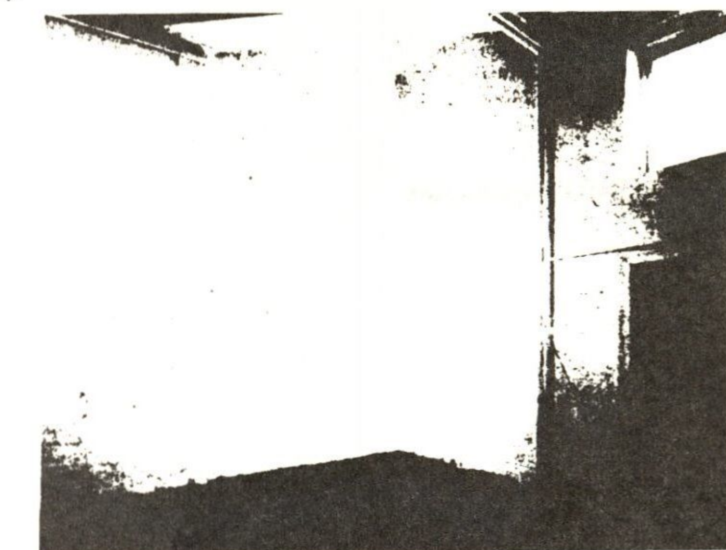
ARTFORUM
JUNE, 1973

ARTFORUM review of Joel Shapiro exhibition at The CLOCKTOWER, the exhibition/performance center of the Institute for Art and Urban Resources.

JOEL SHAPIRO, The Clocktower;



Joel Shapiro, Installation view, 1973.

An exhibition of sculpture by JOEL SHAPIRO initiated the use of a new space donated by the City of New York to the Institute for Art and Urban Resources. This organization, directed by Alanna Heiss, was responsible for three exhibitions last spring in the warehouse at 10 Bleecker Street and the large group show under the Brooklyn Bridge two years ago. The space this time is the clocktower atop a 13-story municipal building at 108 Leonard Street in downtown Manhattan; it will serve for the exhibition of work by contemporary artists for at least a year. The Clocktower is reached via elevator, stairs, a long hallway, and more stairs. It has impressive proportions of about 30' x 30' x 30', white brick walls, a gray cement floor and a metal spiral staircase which leads to a small second level. This nearly cubic space is exciting in itself and could easily obscure art, but it particularly suits the experience of Shapiro's three pieces of sculpture.

The first piece is a small bridge of milled cast iron (measuring 3½" x 22½" x 3"), placed on the floor of the larger, lower space and therefore visible from a variety of points: close-up, across the room, or from the staircase. This solitary iron bridge succeeds one of balsa wood, part of a four-unit piece which also included a bronze bird, a basswood boat and a balsa wood coffin and which was seen in the "Small Series" exhibition at the Paula Cooper Gallery earlier this season. While the fragility of this earlier piece tended to make one feel clumsy and somewhat threatening, the more recent work is totally imperishable and sufficient. The change in material and scale is extreme. The bridge has a dense solidity which causes it to lock heavily onto the floor yet remain very distinct and visible. Part of its sufficiency results from weight and scale; it looks distant rather than small. In establishing this distance, the bridge literally puts a lot of ground between itself and the viewer, asserting its own presence, that of the empty and surrounding area, and that of the solidly horizontal place on which it rests. In some ways this is almost illusionistic, except that the source of the assertion is so apparent in the physical singleness, weight, and scale of the milled iron.

On the second level, at the top of the spiral staircase, is a small balsa wood ladder, 11" tall and leaning against the wall. The bridge is light and linear, not consistently visible but very visible at close range and particularly when seen from the side. There is, again, the sense that one is unusually large, towering dangerously above the ladder. This and its shifting visibility make the perception of the ladder, of one's body in relation to it and of the plane which both occupy slightly disorienting and precarious. The ladder functions as an inverse of the bridge. Their contrast and tension is in itself interesting.

The third piece of sculpture in the exhibition consists of two roughly modeled birds cast in bronze and placed on a shelf, also on the second level of the Clocktower. The birds are to be held, one in each hand. They are not interchangeable; one fits the left, the other the right. Their heads are turned in a way which suggests broken necks but which also fills the crooks between the thumb and forefinger of each hand. Holding the birds involves a visual and physical experience of bilateralness, of weight (and horizontality as one's hands are pulled downward), of the strength and space of one's grasp. These two small objects make any pair of hands literally and completely full. The solidity and denseness of the bridge is also present here; the equilibrium disturbed by the ladder is stabilized.

The visual and physical experience of these pieces reflects Shapiro's continuing concerns with the nature and weight of material, and the symmetry and forming ability of humans. The ladder and bridge reflect these concerns as specific, formed objects and also as images signifying structures which people use and use symmetrically (in walking or climbing). The image of the held birds suggests that they were crushed, a suggestion subordinated to the sense of their weight and indestructability. In each case, the imagery is balanced by the abstraction implicit in work which clarifies our perception of space, scale, and materials. Taken abstractly, Shapiro's facilitates the experience of one's verticality and symmetry, particularly as it opposes the horizontality and symmetry of the work, of the perspective established in the angle between eye and floor level, and of the change in perspective which results from physical movement across the horizontal.

Shapiro's sculpture is complex; it has several levels of meaning and experience. These three pieces clarify each other and much of his previous work. They benefit from their combination and their placement in the Clocktower. But they would be good anywhere; their relatedness reflects the coherence of Shapiro's diverse work.

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the village VOICE CENTERFOLD

the village VOICE, *June* 7, 1973

art

James Bishop: Paintings by this accomplished young artist fill the luminous interior of the Clocktower with color. The Clocktower interior, provided by the Institute for Art and Urban Resources, is a brilliant, too isolated example of how urban spaces already existisng may be used in conjunction with the visual arts. The two previous shows here by Richard Tuttle and Joel Shapiro were exceptional and James Bishop's paintings have never had a more compatible environment. (Clocktower, 108 Leonard Street, May 31 - June 24, Thursday, 1-8, Fri, Sat, Sun, 1-6) **VVV**

THE VILLAGE VOICE review of
James Bishop exhibition at
The CLOCKTOWER, the exhibition/
performance center of the
Institute for Art and Urban
Resources.

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the village VOICE

December 20, 1973

art

THIS YEAR A Christmas mood needs definitely to be pursued. It just won't happen by itself. If you are as affected by the gloomy news as I, I don't have to explain why. But although I sometimes think there is an energy crisis in the art world too, art goes on in spite of everything, as it always has, short of total disaster. Although I may have been hyped, several people have reported to me that art sales are up, which should be a cheerful thought, at least for artists. Shortages seem to mean loose money for those who have it to begin with and there's definitely not an art shortage. Even on the extremely mundane level of investment art looks better and better.

Lynda Benglis's show of wall sculptures at the Clocktower should also cheer you up. Beautiful audacity always works for me. The Clocktower, supported by the Institute for Art and Urban Resources, is at 108 Leonard Street (at Broadway). I usually take the BMT and walk a few blocks down from Canal. The Clocktower is actually a clocktower in an old office building and is open on Thursdays from 1 to 8 and on Fridays and Saturdays from 1 to 6.

Lynda Benglis is an artist it has taken me too long to catch up with, although I remember every one of her shows very well. She seems to work in series. There were floor pieces of poured latex, beautiful bee's wax wall pieces, gigantic plastic foam pieces that jutted out from the wall like abstract, monster insects. For the last few years she has been working on a series of "knots," wall pieces of an alphabetical nature, knotted material hardened into some very odd shapes, paint splashed and often sprinkled with glitter. They are garish and poignant, a strange combination. The whole space of the Clocktower is decorated with Christmas lights, too. Why am I moved? Maybe by the time she has her show of metallic knots at Paula Cooper this spring, I'll be able to figure out why.

THE VILLAGE VOICE review of Linda Benglis at the CLOCKTOWER, the exhibition/performance center of the Institute for Art and Urban Resources.

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the village VOICE, *April* 26, 1973

Miniatures that dwarf the massive

In contrast to Andre's successful but very different, almost opposite, approaches to small sculpture, I found Joel Shapiro's works to be slight or tricky or unresolved. I don't know which. He's obviously been influenced by Habor, but his attempts to control large spaces by carefully situated small models seems to have only one effect: that of making the viewer feel like a Gulliver in Art Land. A tiny bridge on the floor, a tiny ladder leaning up against the wall, and two cast-metal items on a shelf are all there is to this show. Shapiro is talented, but "minimalizing" the idea of representational miniature sculpture is just not a strong enough or personal enough statement at this point. Merely being disconcerting will not suffice. The view from the clocktower is breathtaking and the two spaces, joined by an open spiral staircase, are flooded with light. Against these odds, sculpture depending mainly upon the frustration of expectancy hardly can be expected to hold its own. It is in fact demolished.

The Shapiro show is in the newly spruced up clocktower of a building at 346 Broadway (at Leonard Street), below Canal but close enough to SoHo galleries to be within walking distance if your energy holds and it's a nice day. The clocktower is a space recently salvaged for art exhibitions by the Institute for Art and Urban Resources. Alanna Heiss is the director and more shows are scheduled.

THE VILLAGE VOICE review of Joel Shapiro exhibition at The CLOCKTOWER, the exhibition/ performance center of the Institute for Art and Urban Resources.

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CLOCKTOWER EXHIBIT
Steve Gianakos / Recent Works
November 21-December 21, 1974

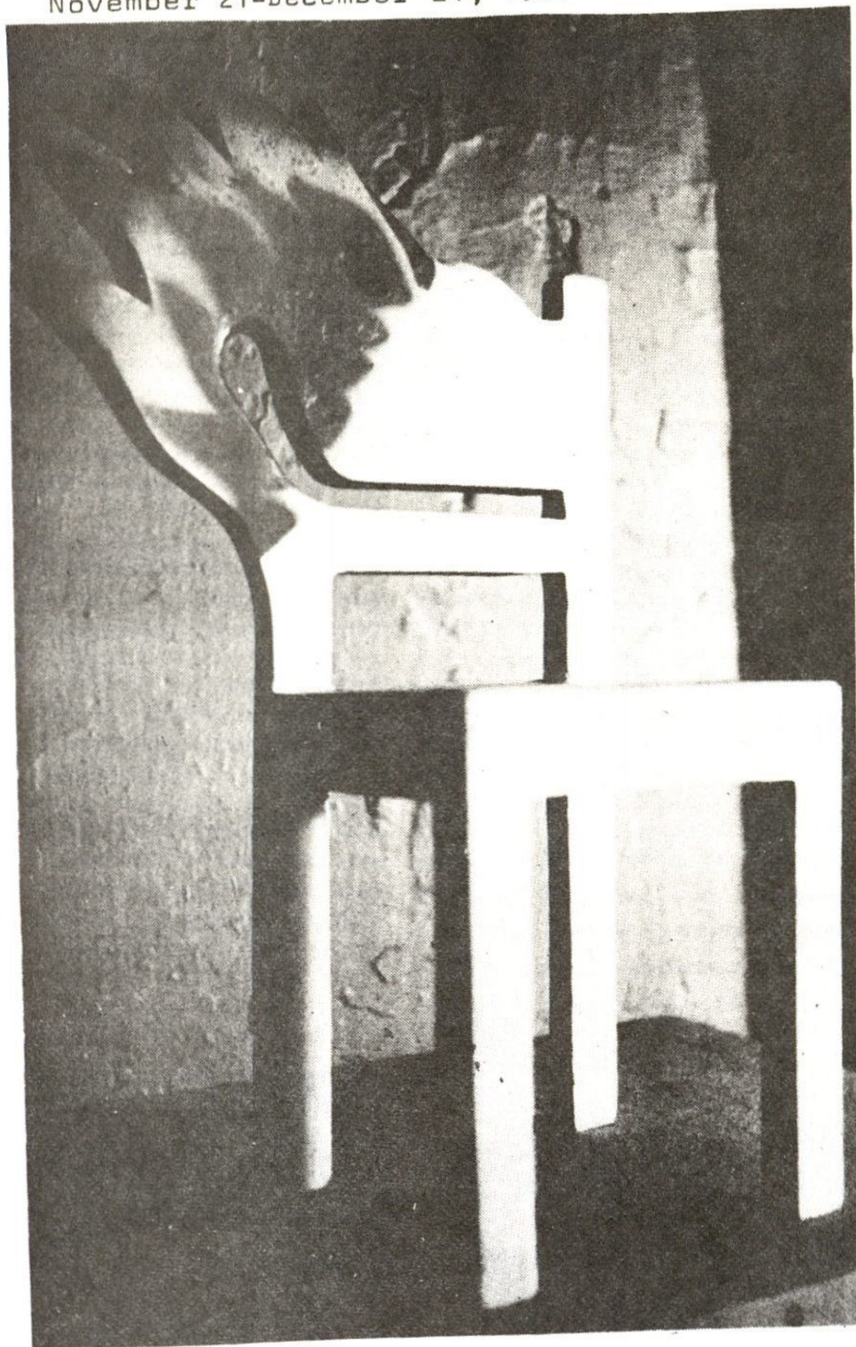
Toward A More Beautiful Coffin

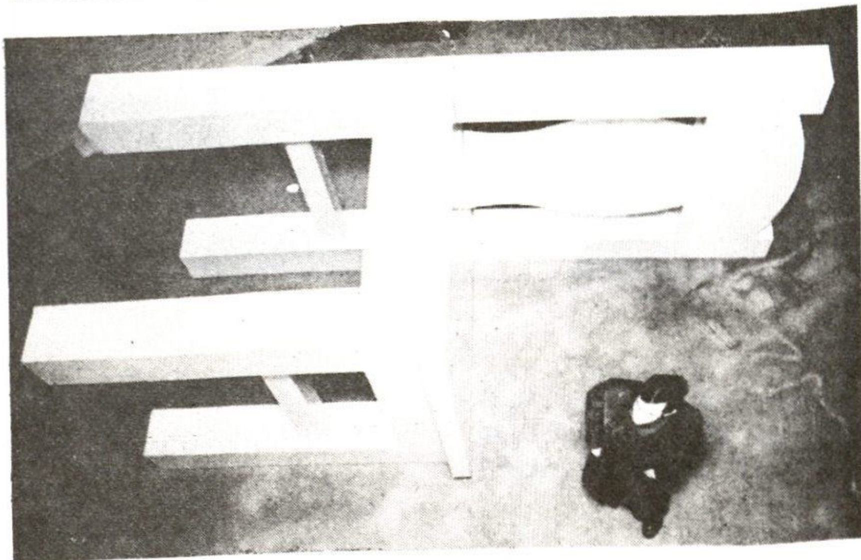
Steve Gianakos' work of the last five years is made of cardboard, spray paint, and sometimes aluminum foil, normal objects depicted in ridiculous and/or violent situations. They are usually miniature in scale, but occasionally his sculpture and paintings on cardboard reach giantsize. Furniture (chairs and beds, tables and vanities, lamps and rugs), food (carrots, franks, pizza, sandwiches, pork chops, fried eggs, cups of coffee), and animals (crocodiles and alligators, ostriches and dinosaurs, elephants and fleas, chickens, dogs, and sharks) are his most frequent subjects. He also uses means of transportation such as cars, boats, and rocketships. (Gianakos never uses people, but he does portraits nonetheless — of robots and ghosts.) This modern Americana is subjected to two kinds of situations: catastrophes like suicides, fire, sinking and drowning, breaking, being struck by lightning, being attacked, crashing, or getting wounded. The other less common situation is playing or relaxing, mostly loafing or having breakfast in bed. Dagwood Bumstead's idea of leisure class living.

Gianakos' work of the early '70s deals mainly with sitcom gags — crocodiles steal park benches, baby carrots play on sliding boards, and a frankfurter couple checked into a hotel room with hot dog rolls for beds, a lunch counter napkin holder for an armoire, and a mustard and ketchup dressing table. Works from this early period include *A Fried Egg Being Struck by a Bolt of Lightning* (which it is), and *Custer's Last Cup of Coffee* (a spilled cup of coffee on a tiny table is pierced by an arrow).

The more recent work, some of which was shown at The Clocktower this winter, includes a car committing suicide by driving off a skyscraper, a giant wounded chair on its side, a one-alarm fire in a washing machine (as well as *Three Alarm Stove*), a lifesize broken bed, and the underside of a burning car.

Headline Chair is an eight-inch-high cardboard easy chair covered with the front page of a tabloid with the headline: "PIMP PALACE RAIDED, NAB 26" in letters of pink glitter, orange, green, purple, and other "tropical" colors. Not shown at The Clocktower is the headline series, a group of pseudo-paintings on newsprint in which the front page of the *Daily News* provides the format, and the banner headlines have been altered to invent morbidly ridiculous episodes in current events. These works too are sprayed in bright colors and sprinkled with glitter. It's like a meeting of rock music art (richly decorated album covers and costumes) with a species of "story art".





ART-RITE #8

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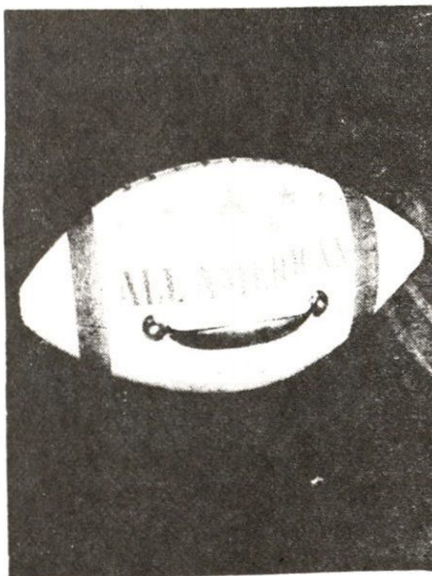
VOICE CENTREFOLD
741-0010 ext. 328
Jan. 2—Jan. 8
Editor: Alexandra Anderson
The VOICE Rates New York: 0 V VV VVV VVVV

ARTISTS' PLAYTHINGS

ARTISTS MAKE TOYS: The Clocktower has been running exhibits and events for two years. Their four shows each year have been innovative and imaginative; their utilization of the deserted space at the top of the tower on Leonard Street has brought new life to a relatively overlooked part of the city. Now, their most ambitious project yet: over 60 artists were asked to make toys for child, adult or animal. The results are in and you won't find anything like them at F.A.O. Schwartz, either. Max Neuhaus presents underwater music in a bathtub—a scaled-down exercise which reflects his continuing fascination with underwater sound, usually occurring in huge swimming pools. Mark de Suervero's "Auto Tire Swing" is the definitive expression of the activity. Joe Zucker, in sympathy with all that fumbling that earned you contempt from your more co-ordinated peers, gives you a football with a handle. Marjorie Strider's "Small House with Foam" is an artist's version of imagined disaster, while George Sugarman's small, primary colored "Whale" cavorts on a shelf. James Crashaw has come up with the most startling stuffed animal, a six-foot-long "Alligator Dressed in Leather Jacket." It smiles. Laurie Anderson's musical pillow plays when you hold it to you ear. Jeff Lew made a set of drawers stuffed with paper, for children to scatter everywhere, obviously. Charles Ginnever's "Tightrope One Foot Off the Ground" will comfort all who suffer from acrophobia. The exhibition opens New Year's Day, with a bar (50¢ for drinks) and many of the contributors around it to celebrate. Bob Kushner, who is remembered fondly for his "nude fashion show," will close the show with a new fashion show of hats. Models will descend (carefully) the spiral, iron staircase from the clocktower, wearing hats made from odds and ends which might overwhelm Seventh Avenue once and for all. Their precarious arrival will be accompanied by the best from "Muzak" and a running commentary by the artist. Go on down and play. **(ARTISTS MAKE TOYS, The Clock Tower, 108 Leonard Street, 233-1096, Jan. 1 thru Jan. 25, open house, New Year's Day from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Kushner performance, Jan. 25, reservations should be made for this one.) (AA)** VVVV

photographs by Nancy Dubin



Football by Joe Zucker

Drawing by Tom Johnson

Hat by Bob Kushner

The Village Voice article on the CLOCKTOWER exhibition, "Artists Make Toys"

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 1975

Arts and Leisure Guide

Edited by ANN BARRY

Art **25, 26**

TOYS IN AN ATTIC—The Clocktower a unique non-profit gallery situated atop the municipal office building at 108 Leonard Street, has mounted a novel show for children. The multilevel space has been turned into a playground filled with toys designed by about 60 artists. Among the most successful are Tosh Carrillo's creation of a fantasy treehouse. Robert Morris's abstract version of a whirl-around and Red Grooms's comic-book "City Lights." A visit to the early 19th-century clocktower makes a delightful finale.

TOYS BY ARTISTS—Approximately 60 artists showing works in a wide variety of mediums. Clocktower, 108 Leonard St. Thurs.-Sat., 1-6. Through Feb. 15.

NEW YORK TIMES review of "Artists Make Toys" show at The CLOCKTOWER, the performance/exhibition center of the Institute for Art and Urban Resources.

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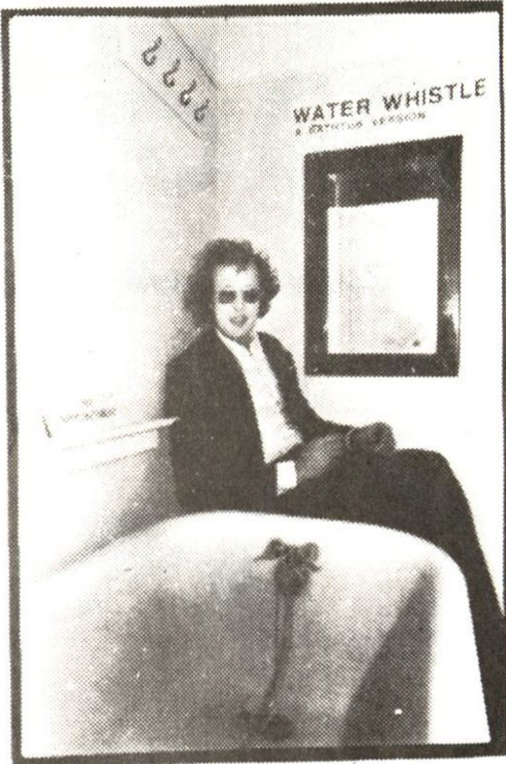
SOHO WEEKLY NEWS / Thursday January 9, 1975



Max Neuhaus with his "toy"

Kids testing artist-made toy at The Clocktower.

Flashback

Rose Hartman

The youngest collector who lent a Sugarman toy to the fabulous Clocktower show of "40 Artist Design Toys" was Irving Sandler's 7-year-old daughter. Noticed **Alan Shields,** resembling a modern Johnny Appleseed polishing nails in every color of the rainbow. Wonderful to meet and greet old and new friends and finally see the children excited by an exhibition. If this opening is a barometer of the future, '75 will be nothing less than glorious. Special praise to curator **Alanna Heiss** who, although she hadn't slept for 2 days, knew it had all been worth it!

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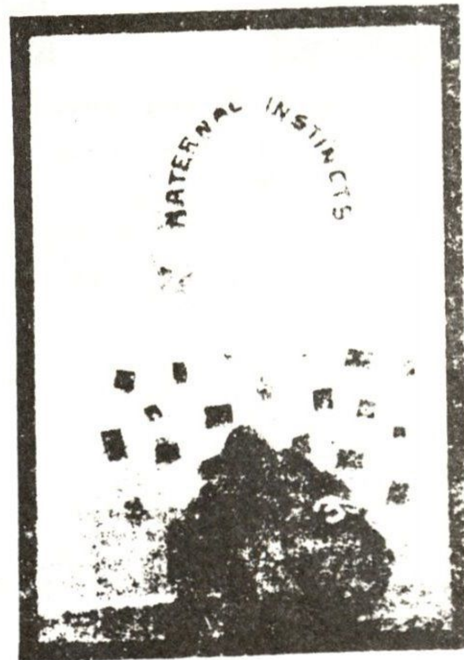
Art Scope

edited by Judy Beardsall

Artists Toys

Artists Make Toys, **a group show in which 64 artists were asked to "create a toy for an adult, a child, or an animal, and to let their fantasies go," opens on New Year's Day at the Clocktower Gallery (346 Broadway and 108 Leonard Street entrances).**



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Newsweek

AUGUST 11, 1975

NEW SUPERCOLLECTOR

At his eighteenth-century palazzo in Varese, near Milan, Giuseppe Panza di Biumo takes nothing lightly, least of all A-R-T. "For me," the 52-year-old count says, "art is the visualization of philosophy." It is this belief that has led him to spend a huge chunk of his family's fortune on avant-garde works, and to convert his 225-year-old dwelling into nothing less than an art castle. Barns and stables have been cleared; long corridors, ceremonial dining rooms, cavernous living quarters have been swept free of traditional Italian décor. Into these elegant spaces have come elegant, hard-edged and minimal paintings, some of them so stark that they show nothing to the eye but solid coats of black or red; severe chunks of metal sculpture; video environments into which the viewer walks to find his own image on TV monitors; and on the top floor, intricate openings that have been cut into the roof by California artist James Turrell so as to flood the room below with mysterious, changing patterns of natural light.

It is no wonder that Panza is looking for another place in which to house a collection that must require, for sheer space, more room than any private art collection since the Medicis'. "In Varese, I have no more space for art rooms," he says, with characteristic understatement. "I need new space for sculpture by Richard Serra, Dan Flavin, Donald Judd and Robert Morris." To get it, Panza is actively searching for museums in Europe and in the U.S. that will take segments of his collection on fifteen-year loans. Already the early fruits of his passion—paintings by Franz Kline, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist and others—are out on loan to a small-town museum near Düsseldorf, Germany.

But the rest of Count Panza's vast holdings—in conceptual, minimal, "environmental" and video art—presents insuperable difficulties to most museums. He is inflexible in his judgment about the spaces to contain them. "The works of the impressionists, cubists, surrealists and European abstractionists can be isolated from the space in which they were first seen," he says. "The works in my collection cannot." Panza's point is that in the mid-1960s, particularly in the U.S., "private" art took on a public, "universal" dimension—becoming not only large in scale but requiring a specific quantity of open space around it. "The large-size work conditions the space which surrounds it," he says. "The work and the space are interdependent."

What this means is that thousands of cubic feet of indoor space are required to install his works outside Varese. Panza has devised a series of options—but each one is potentially destructive to any museum that is limited in space and budget. Nonetheless, he has offered outsiders either a "Conceptual Art Museum" (space required: 11,004 square feet) or a "Minimal Art Museum" (13,451 square feet).

So far, most nibbles at his offer have come from museums in Europe, which saddens him. He wants above all to place part of this American-rich collection in the U.S. "You are having a renaissance period there, like Italy in the fifteenth century," he says. This is not the only hint of Panza's devout belief in work. Following him around the castle of art in Varese is like trailing a monk chanting liturgies. He walks softly in and out of his precisely installed rooms, pointing now to this nuance of form, now to that ray of sunlight falling on a corner of one of his sculptures.

Robert Emmett Bright

Panza and his Varese palazzo: 'I have no more space for art rooms'

But Panza, like Stanley Marsh, is more involved with ideas than with the appearance of things—placing him in the heart of the '70s rather than the '60s. Although he is a doctor of laws and an active investor in real estate, his real passion is philosophy. "I still read philosophy all the time," he says. Only a mind that gorges on speculation, on the fine line between reality and illusion, can fully share Panza's passion for art that makes you think rather than simply enjoy. On his last trip to New York he could talk of nothing except a recent trip to the Nevada desert to commission a work by Walter De Maria. "He draws a cross in the sand with white chalk," says Panza, his eyes gleaming, "and in a few days, from wind and rain, it is gone."

DOUGLAS DAVIS

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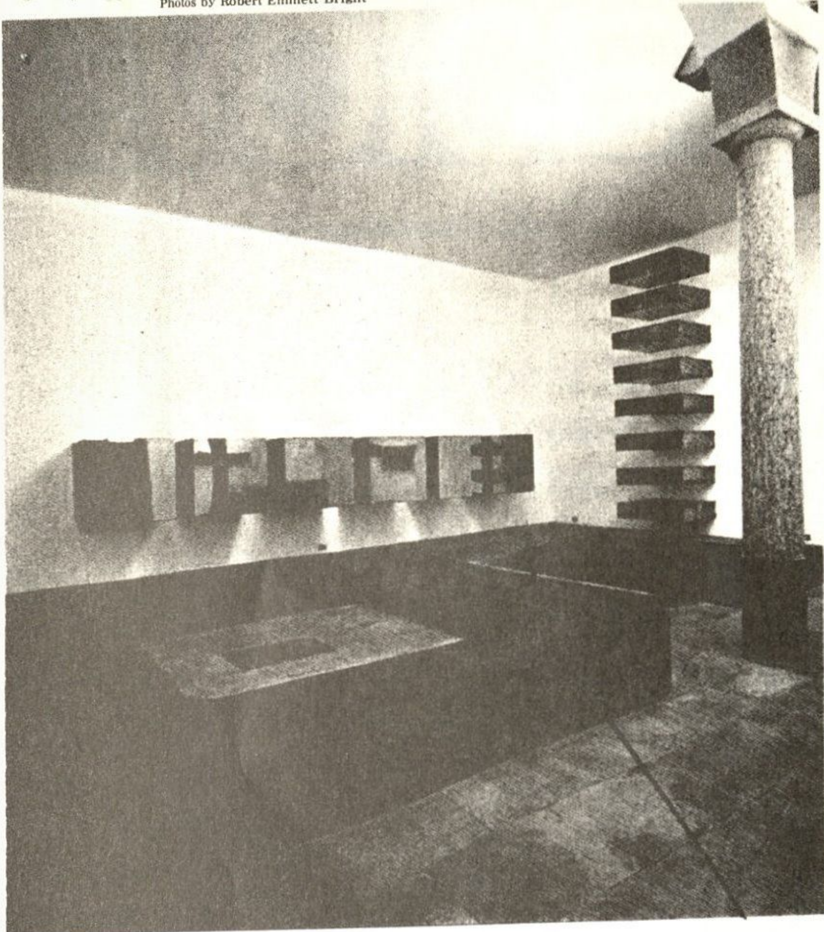
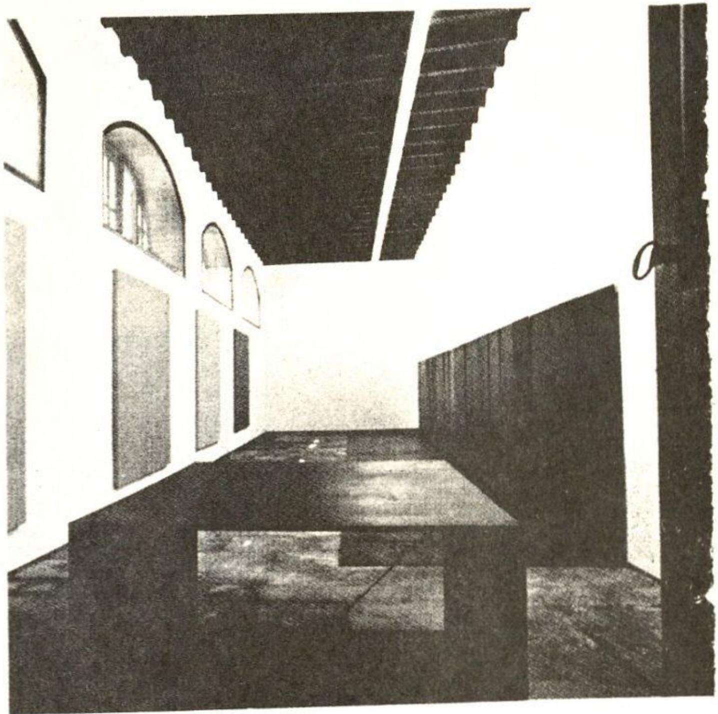
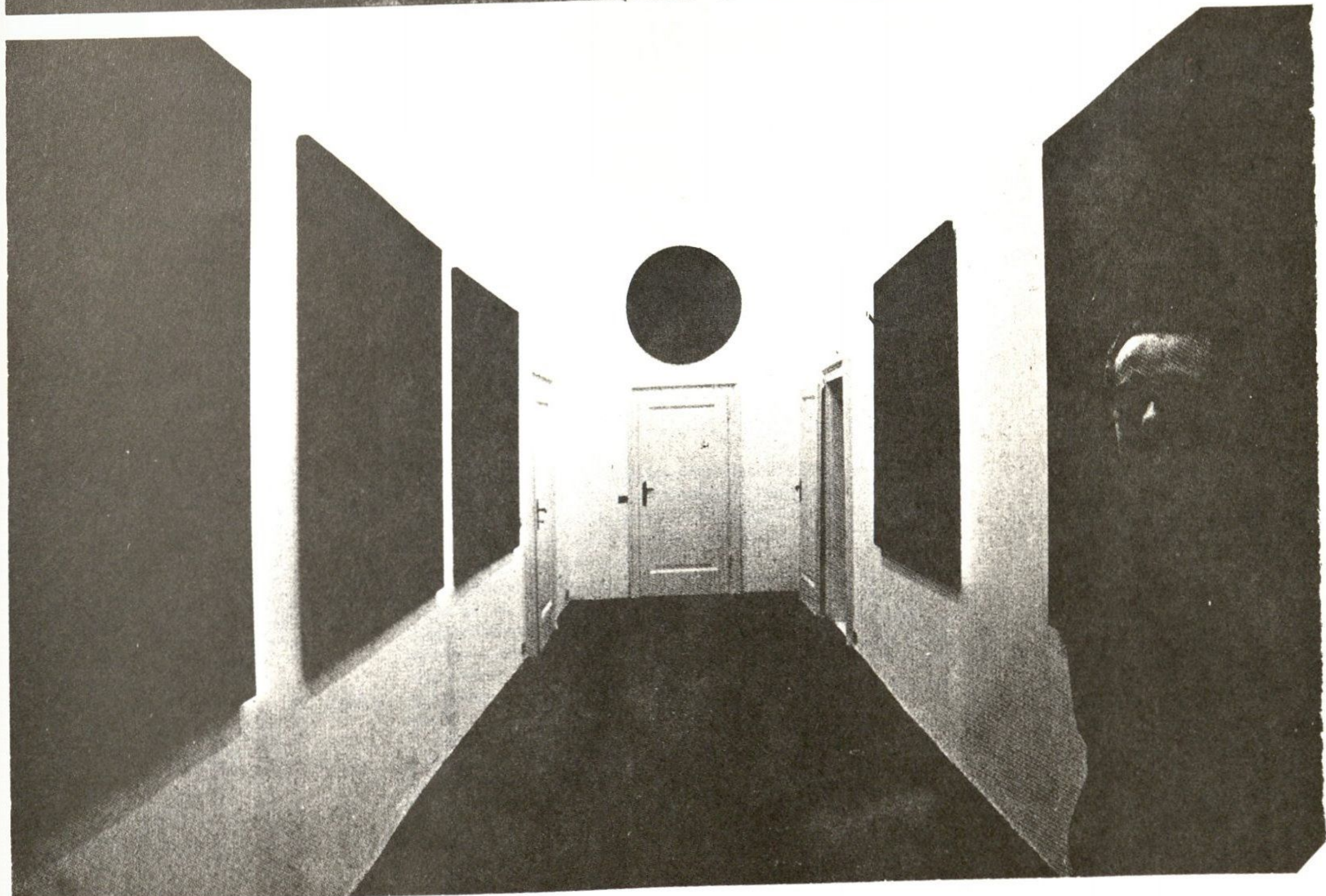
Photos by Robert Emmett Bright



LESS IS MORE: Count Giuseppe Panza di Biumo presides over a huge collection of minimal art in his eighteenth-century palazzo, including a room of Donald Judd sculptures (left); a gallery for Judd's open cube, Carl Andre's steel slabs and paintings by Allan Charlton; and (bottom) a corridor with Robert Law's black squares set off by Robert Mangold's orange disk





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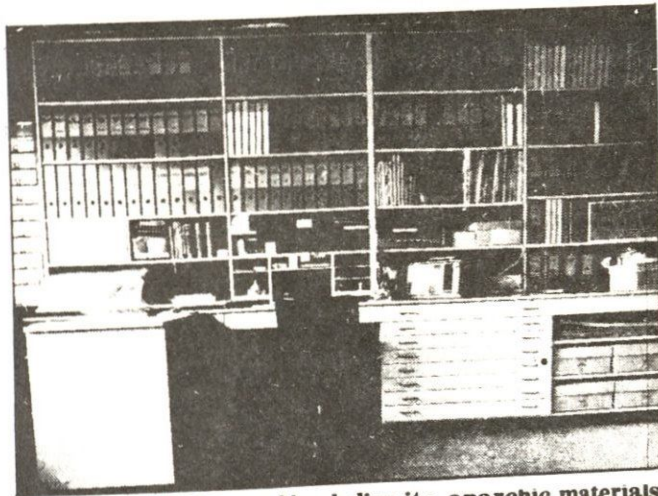
the village VOICE

MON. DECEMBER 15, 1975

CULTURE SHOCK

BY ANNETTE KUHN

'Sohm has every scrap of paper he could find on the happenings of Grooms, Oldenburg, and Ono.'



The orderly Sohm archive belies its anarchic materials.

Collectomania

Hanns Sohm is a middle-aged German dentist who lives in a small town outside of Stuttgart. But his professional life seems not to be the important thing to him. He is an archivist, and a thorough one. Since the early '60s he has collected the documentations on happenings, avant-garde music and dance performances, and all sorts of other ceremonies and events. He has collected the materials left behind by the globe-trotting, constantly changing group of performers who work under the name of Fluxus. The materials are scripts, posters, programs, photos, and newspaper reviews.

Allan Kaprow's early happenings, the events of Red Grooms, Nam June Paik, Claes Oldenburg, and Yoko Ono, and Charlotte Mooreman's avant-garde festivals—Sohm has every scrap of paper about these things he could find, all neatly arranged in his archive.

For the first time Sohm has sent material from his collection to New York, where it is on exhibition at the Clocktower Gallery, 108 Leonard Street. The material at Clocktower relates mostly to the Fluxus group, which, broadly, has included anybody who has ever staged an event anywhere.

Exhibitions like this are a little difficult to digest, because there is no striking visual material, just the mementos of ephemeral events, lots of little scraps of this and that—programs, polemics, photos. But even so, these scraps are evocative of the high humor and mischievous dislocation of preconceptions that this group of international troubadours has brought to the art world.

Sohm, in 1970, put together a fat catalogue of his collection. Arranged chronologically beginning in 1959, it lists every event—the participants, the location and the documentation. It is heavily illustrated and has a bibliography. Called "Happening and Fluxus," it can be ordered from Wittenborn and Co., 1018 Madison Avenue. Copies are also available for reading at the Clocktower.

The exhibition itself runs Thursdays through Saturdays, from 1 to 6 p.m. through January 3. □

VILLAGE VOICE article
on the SOHM ARCHIVE,
SELECTIONS FROM THE
FLUXUS SECTION AT
The Clocktower,
Nov. 20 - Jan. 3,1975
108 Leonard St.,
N Y C 10013

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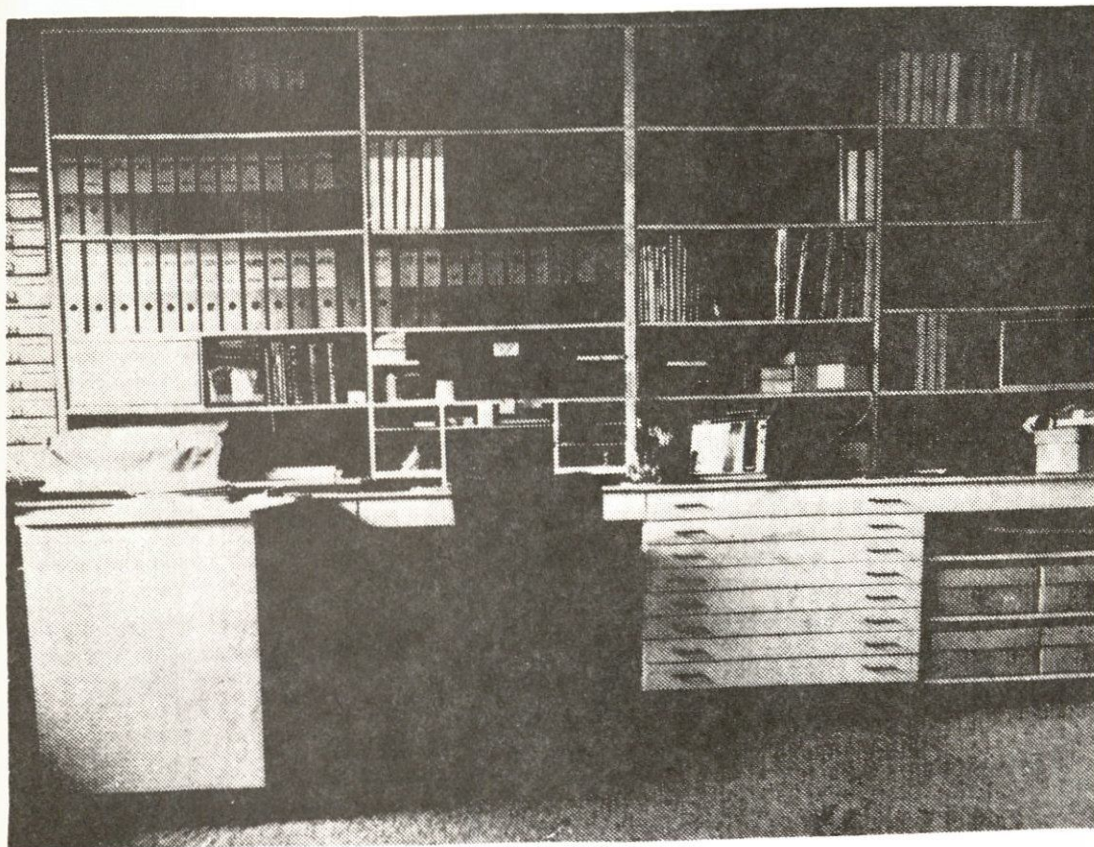
THE SOHO WEEKLY NEWS
Vol. III No.

JOHN PERREAULT

Sohm Archive
The Clocktower
108 Leonard St.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1975

Fluxus



These thoughts or probes are generated by many things. First there is the Sohm Archive at The Clocktower Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, one to six, until December 13th. Herr Hans Sohm is a dentist. And here we are treated to or bored by "Selections from the Fluxus Section." Fluxus was, as anyone who knows about Happenings and such, an extremely informal, international non-movement. The best-known graduate is Herr Joseph Bueys or Yoko Ono, depending upon your point of view. Some other Fluxus people were: George Brecht, Wolf Vostell, George Maciunas, Ben Vautier, Daniel Spoerri, Dick Higgins, La Monte Young. All that is left is Herr Sohm's Archive, consisting of announcements, books, and intriguing photographs. The orientation was neo-Dada and musical. Young, Nam June Paik, and Ben Patterson were stars. Maciunas, a charming man, went on to dealing in Soho co-ops. Yoko Ono went on to sing, sort of.

Given the music orientation here and the generally low level of creativity, permanence is not really a problem. Composers know about impermanence, for in music, the score is all, but it is not the work, for the performance is. This stuff, it can well be argued, was the source of conceptual art. I myself prefer the more orthodox lineage that dates from Sol LeWitt, a music-lover too.

Aesthetic considerations notwithstanding, it is infinitely sad that all we have left of Fluxus is a file of two-dimensional objects. Some scores, some photographs. The idea was admirable, but now that we are stuck with nothing but documents, the idea proves not to have been enough. Interesting, true, but not really enough.

SOHO WEEKLY NEWS article on the SOHM ARCHIVE - SELECTIONS FROM THE FLUXUS SECTION at The Clocktower, Nov. 20 - Jan.3'75

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SOHO WEEKLY NEWS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1975

Incidentally, Colette's room installation at the Clocktower resembled the inside of a plush, satin-cushioned and mirrored coffin. There she lay, like a Pre-Raphaelite, Dracula's daughter or Sleeping Beauty in her reclining semi-nude, Venus Pudica pose. She managed to mix up every fairy tale character and nursery rhyme before the Clocktower struck twelve. Midway, Colette must have decided her Prince Charming wasn't about to leap into the coffin and awaken her with a kiss, so she slipped on a satin and lace nightgown and tried to be Cinderella attending the Prince's ball in the Clocktower Palace. After all, everyone had long since abandoned the scene of the wake, drank up all the champagne and were whooping it up to the disco music in the Dance Studio at the oppostie end of Clocktower's thirteenth floor. Midnight came and Colette could be seen wandering the halls like the Poor Little Match Girl looking for a light. The only thing missing in the whole event was a glass slipper on the stairs leading down to the elevators as we left the mock-ball.

MONA DA VINCI

COLETTE, Room Installation, through Jan. 17, The Clocktower, 108 Leonard St.

Allan Tannenbaum

Sleeping Beauty?

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ARTnews

new york reviews

NOVEMBER 1975

A Collection in Progress: Collection of Milton Brutten and Helen Herrick (Clocktower): Part of a series of exhibitions which deal with the committed collector of current art, the Brutten-Herrick show had a definite point of view. There were few "stars" (the Wilmarth and Smithson were left at home, allegedly to leave room for younger, lesser known artists, although Joel Shapiro, Lucio Pozzi and Richard Nonas are represented), few large canvases or big sculpture. Most of the works were drawings. There were fine examples of patterned images on paper by Mike Goldberg, a delicate geometric silkscreen by Joel Bass, a gutsy charcoal drawing by Christos Ginakos and a sweet surprise of a gouache called *Cumulus Clouds* by Katherine Porter. There was a direct, formal black and white floor sculpture by Carole Conde, a tiny, warm yellow painting by Joel Shapiro and some good examples of Jed Bark's work, mostly from his photo machine series. I also liked the brooding, grim painting by Leefer. There were the usual inconsistencies found in any collection: a chatty, surrealistic Richard Merkin; a garish, splay-legged red and green nude by Bob Stanley; and a peculiar photorealist drawing by Naoto Nakagawa. However, on the whole, the collection reflects an interest in the understated, geometric, spare art so typical of the '70s—a decided leaning toward pure minimal values. One's impression is that these collectors pored over countless drawings, paintings or sculptures in the artists' studios, that the works did not come out of gallery exhibitions or, if they did, that it was purely incidental. This is a highly personal collection, one which is not dictated by a critic's voice or purchased for good investment reasons. Therein lies its beauty and its flaw. One looks for a loud, resounding work, but does not find it. However, though there are no knockouts, this Philadelphia collection brooks no nonsense.

● BARBARA ZUCKER

Art News article on "A Collection in Progress: Milton Brutten and Helen Herrick" at the Clocktower, 108 Leonard St., NYC, 10013, Sept. 18-Oct. 18, 1975

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Photo: Jacki Ochs

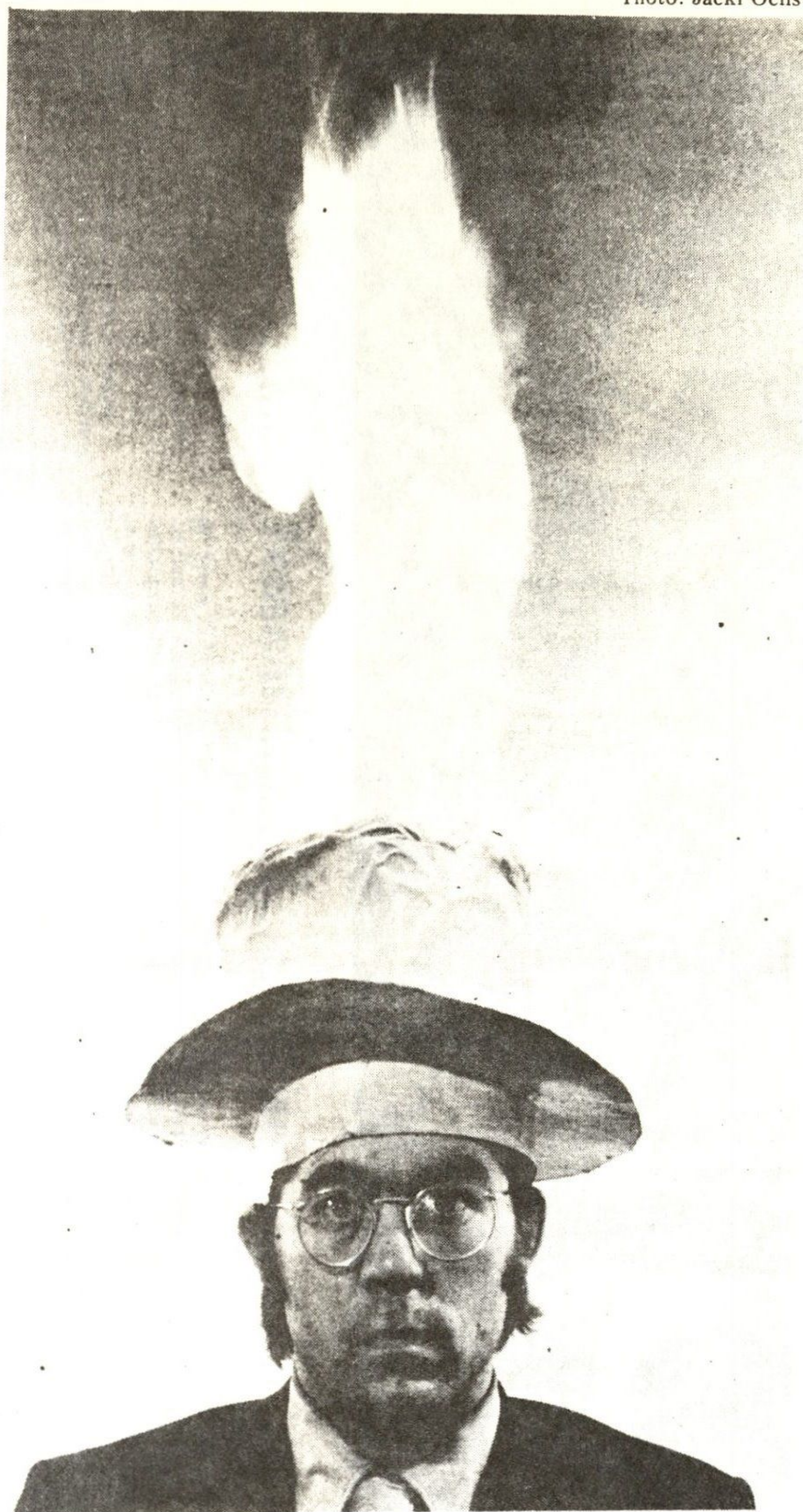

Photo of Robin Winters from Avalanche, Winter 1975 from his performance at the Idea Warehouse, 22 Reade St., New York City, June 1975.

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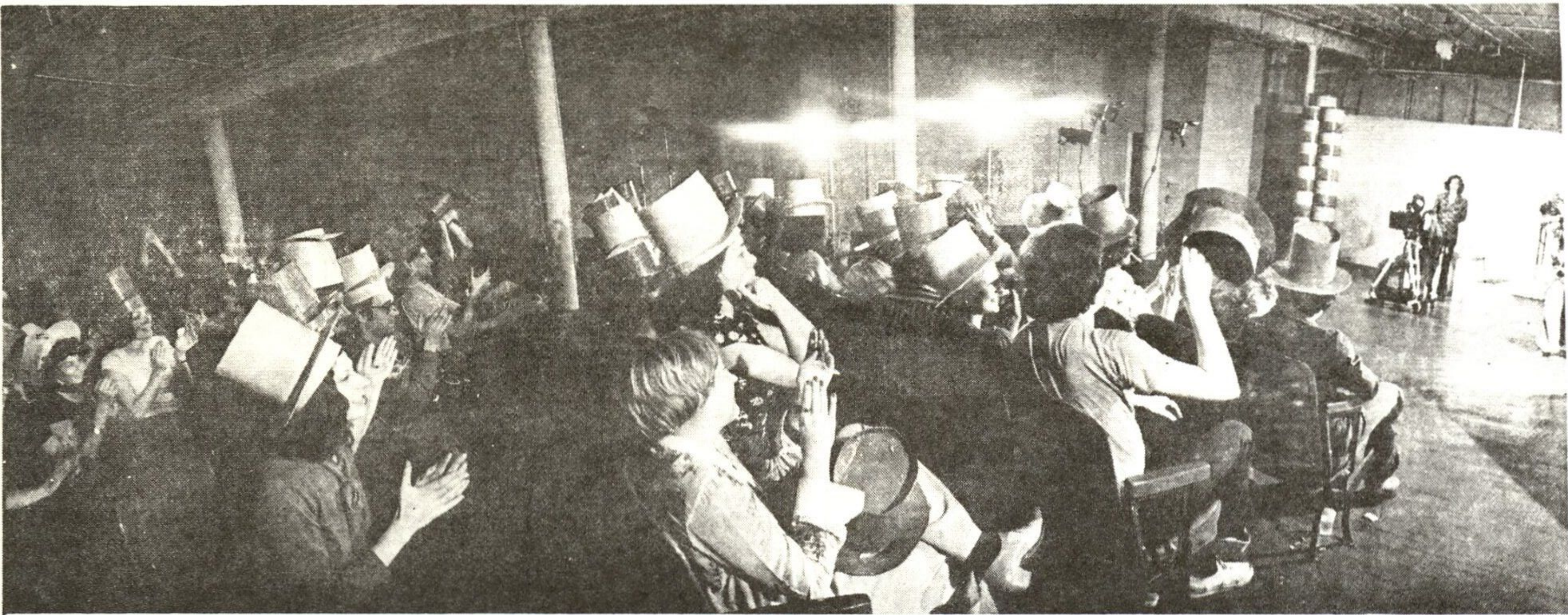

Photo: Lizbeth Marano

Boredom...............Tension...............Surprise.......................................

● Scene 1: **Boredom** (cameras on audience) Audience is given sunglasses & cigarettes and is asked to Act Bored cameras turn to performers performer sits in chair & smokes a ten foot long cigarette and rings for his butler to come & relight it.

● Scene 2: **Tension** (Cameras on Audience) Audience is given kazzoos & balloons and asked to hum the anvil chorus while popping balloons. Cameras on performers. performer sits on podium for three minutes & sandbag knocks him off.

● Scene 3: **Surprise** (Cameras on Audience) Audience is given candles and asked to blow them out when blown out they relight cameras on performer. performer walks out wearing a top hat with a lit sparkler in hand sits on podium and touches sparkler to hat which flames in the air hat burns for 3 minutes & 50 blue & yellow rubber balls fall on his-head performer hands out playing cards to audience for a lottery the three jokers in the deck win a chance to throw a pie at the performer 1st throw misses 2nd throw direct hit in face 3rd throw direct hit in crotch. Applause

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<u>AVALANCHE</u> - WINTER 1975

This performance of YOUR SCENE...MY SCENE...THREE ELEMENTS OF PERFORMANCE: BOREDOM...TENSION...SURPRISE by Robin Winters was given at the Idea Warehouse, the experimental performing space of the Institute for Art & Urban Resources at 22 Reade St. during June, 1975.

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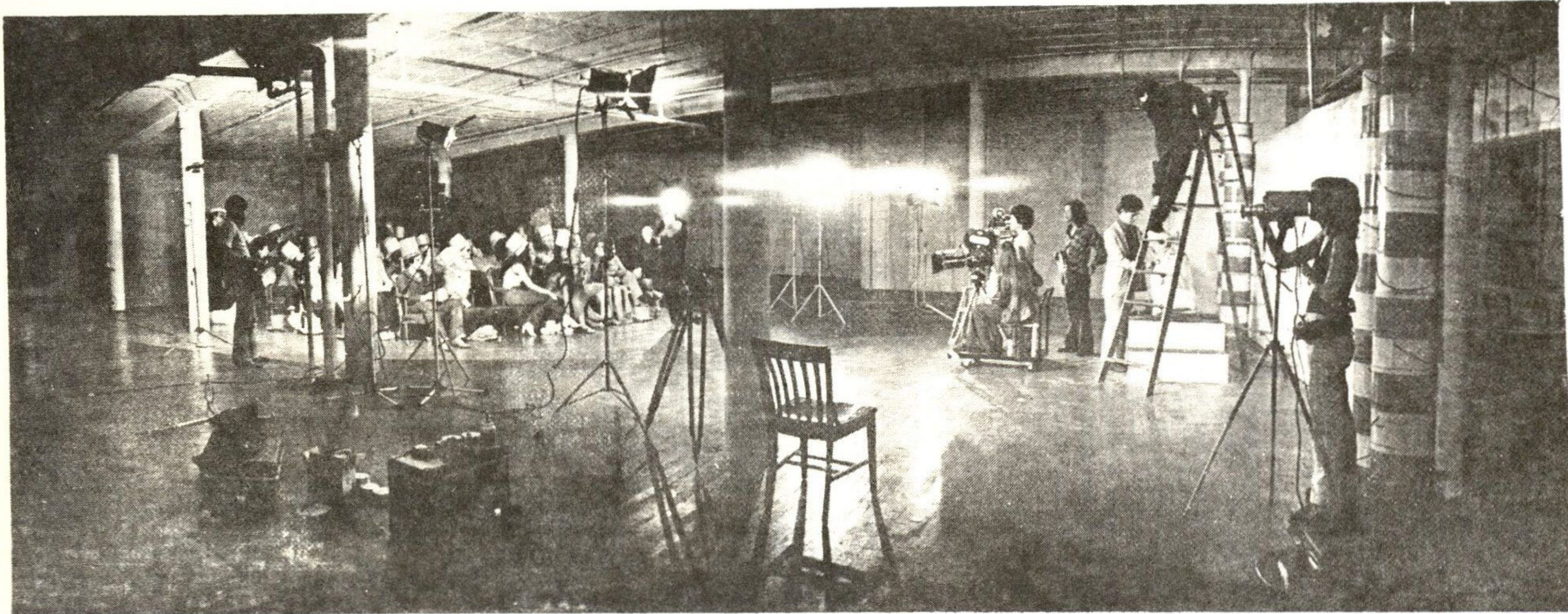

Photo: Lizbeth Marano

Your Scene..........My Scene..............Three Elements of Performance:

July 1975 Crew: Photographs — Lizbeth Morano; Video — Julia Heyward; 1st Camera — Rosetta Rust; 2nd Camera — Jacki Ochs; Camera Assistant — Sukhdeo Doobay; Sound — James Roth; Elevator Props — Timmy Kirkpatrick. Performers: Robin Winters, Jeremy Lipp & Audience with special guest appearances by Kirsten Bates, Ralston Farina, Hannah Wilke. Special thanks to Merc, W.S.K. Productions & Betsy Sussler.

Properties: 25 yellow top hats 25 Blue top hats 11 cups of yellow water 11 cups of Blue water 1 stuffed dog 1 cardboard doll 1 sandbag one podium 1 10 ft long cigarette 25 red kazzoos 25 white kazzoos 50 magic candles 1 sparkler 50 pairs of 3-D sunglasses (courtesy of Ken Jacobs) 50 cigarettes 2 chairs 2 Arriflex cameras 1 Nagra 11 qtz lites 50 blue & yellow rubber balls

Activity: Audience comes in and is asked to put on Blue & yellow top hats exactly 50 people came & there were 50 hats magic performer explains that he is shooting a film & would like the audience to play roles

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This article appeared in Avalanche , Winter 1975. The performance was sponsored by the Institute for Art & Urban Resources and was given at the Idea Warehouse as part of the program, Ideas at the Idea Warehouse, June 16- July 11, 1975.

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ARTFORUM
JANUARY, 1976

Artforum Article on Jared Bark's performance, THE NEUTRON READINGS and LIGHTS: on/off at The Idea Warehouse, 22 Reade Street, New York City, Oct. 10-17, 1975

Jared Bark, *Lights: On/Off*, 1974.

In five evenings at the Idea Warehouse, JARED BARK alternated a performance piece from last year, *Lights: On/Off*, with a new piece titled *The Neutron Readings*. This was appropriate, since the two are closely related and the first provides a gauge to the growth, the improvement and the problems of the second. All of Bark's work, including his photo-booth pieces and his paintings made by firing a BB gun at sheets of glass, involve a number of similar elements: performance, often humorous, if not downright vaudevillian; the misuse of a technique and consequently an amateurish or crude kind of illustration (a gun to make paintings, a photo-booth to make art); an appreciation of scientific knowledge (the gunshots attempted to illustrate specific constellations of the stars). The aspects of science that interest Bark most consistently are forms of light and energy, and in his performances he imbues them with human significance, vulnerability and irony.

Lights: On/Off is a series of short scenes, live, video and slides, while *The Neutron Readings*, a bit more complicated, also employs film projection. In both, Bark functions more as a behind-the-scenes director than as a live performer. In *Lights: On/Off* he wears a scientist's white coat and, until the final scene, is merely a catalyst to various chain reactions among his props. The main prop is the light bulb, a metaphor for light and energy, an image for civilization and mainly a tool for humor. This piece is smoothly organized and a little superficial; it is good, "illuminating" entertainment, like Mr. Wizard. On video, Bark turns the light bulb off with various methods ranging from using the switch to using a hammer, torch and firecracker. He explores the notion of amateur performances involving light in a video of a 1971 performance where, backed by drum and bugle flourishes, he ritualistically aims his BB gun at burning candles, missing every shot. Then in a live sequence he more efficiently uses the BB gun to put out light bulbs and takes a water pistol to the candles. Until the end, the performance is a series of informative puns, metaphorical entendres and pratfalls.

But the last two scenes give the piece a deeper meaning. On video, Bark recounts the story of "Slotan's Light," about a physicist who died in horrible pain after accidentally banging together two spheres of uranium in his lab at Los Alamos. Slotan thus became one of the few people outside Japan to see the thick white light of an atomic explosion. The story and Bark's flat, inexpressive tone are so mesmerizing that the thick white light gradually obscuring his image on the monitor passes unnoticed until the end of the story. And that's when Bark notes that an American scientist testified to a Congressional committee sometime in the '40s that death by atomic explosion is relatively painless. The piece ends with Bark, his face masked, his body shrouded in light bulbs, literally tied down by their plugged-in cords. In clumsy, groping movements, like a trapped monster (it's a sideshow freak, Frankenstein image), Bark struggles to free himself, yanking out the plugs and bringing on the piece's final darkness. So, after the joking around, *Lights: On/Off* culminates with allusions to the irony of man's monstrous primitivism both in spite of and because of his

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